Train Your Dog Like a Pro

JEAN DONALDSON

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To the many dog owners to whom it is simply obvious that it's not okay to hurt and frighten their dogs in order to train them. You are your dogs' guardian angels.

About the Author

Jean Donaldson is the award-winning author of the following selected books:

- *The Culture Clash: A Revolutionary New Way to Understanding the Relationship between Humans and Domestic Dogs*
- *Mine!: A Practical Guide to Resource Guarding in Dogs*
- *Fight!: A Practical Guide to the Treatment of Dog–Dog Aggression*
- *Dogs Are from Neptune*
- *Oh Behave!: Dogs From Pavlov to Premack to Pinker*

A professional trainer since 1986, Jean holds degrees in Comparative Psychology and Music, and competed in numerous dog sports before transitioning to pet dog training.

In 1999 she founded The Academy for Dog Trainers at The San Francisco SPCA, which she directed and instructed in until 2009, when she and Janis Bradley departed to work on a re-invention. The Academy has over five hundred graduates practicing dog training and behavior counseling in most states in the US and 25 countries world-wide.

Jean lives in the San Francisco Bay area with her dog, Buffy, adopted from the San Francisco SPCA in 2002. When she is not working, she is an ardent baseball fan and student of evolutionary biology.

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Introduction

WHAT MAKES A TRAINER?

What is the difference between a skilled professional dog trainer and a dog lover, someone besotted with their dog but who can't seem to get him to obey? "Trainers know what they're doing" is probably the answer that leapt into your mind. It's a skill-set difference, a knowledge gap. And that is indeed a piece of it. But not all.

In 1993 I videotaped two sets of people—dog trainers and nondog trainers—putting dogs through their paces, to see what they did differently. Unsurprisingly, there were numerous critical technical differences and the dogs performed much, much better in the hands of the trainers. The trainers were especially good at setting the level of difficulty; escalating so that progress was constant but easy enough that the dog *won* enough to stay in the game. No doubt about that knowledge gap—the trainers knew how to train. But there was *another* difference, something so basic it struck me only when I was rewinding and fast-forwarding the tape in the course of collecting data. I was amazed to find that I could identify whether the person on the screen was a trainer or not with just a one-second sample, or even a freeze-frame, based strictly on whether or not the person was attempting to train the dog *at all*.

The Perseverance Gap

The nontrainers would typically try something a few times—say, getting the dog to lie down—and then, whether they were successful or not, they would stop training. When the next activity was called for, they'd do the same thing—try two or three repetitions, often with significant pauses in between,

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and then quit. They'd chat with anybody nearby, check their watches, adjust their clothing, sometimes pat the dog. But no more training. Most of their training time consisted of this "between-training" dead air.

The trainers, by contrast, were relentless. Their eyes never left the dog, and they did repetition after repetition. It was hard to get them to break off at the end of the allotted time. This pattern was evident on all dogs: unruly novice animals (*green* dogs in trainer lingo), dogs who were not great learners, dogs who caught on quickly, and dogs who were *ringers*: experienced, highly trained dogs thrown into the mix. The trainers trained like bats out of hell, and the nontrainers were mostly on break time.

Trainers Train

For the last decade, I've instructed at the Academy for Dog Trainers, primarily in a six-week, full-time accelerated program designed to take keen amateurs— people who have titled their dogs in competitive sports, have done extensive dog rescue, or have worked in other dog professions and done a little training on the side—and turn them into professional-level trainers. Between the tuition, the loss of six weeks' wages, travel, accommodations, and countless other expenses, it typically costs a student $10,000 or more to attend the academy. As you might imagine, this is a highly self-motivated bunch of people.

Each student is given a succession of shelter dogs to train. And here's the interesting part. We instructors are constantly trying to get the students to call it a day and *stop training so much!* If not reined in daily by the instructors, the students would not only train far beyond what would be strategically optimal, but they would train into the night. And these dogs can be relatively ungratifying to train: dirty, distractible, green, stressed by the loss of their owners, and often disinterested in the trainer. No matter. Academy students are training addicts.

Process versus Product

The point of all this is that loving *dogs* and loving *training* are two different things. Trainer types find the actual time spent training intrinsically rewarding—they love and are fascinated by the *process*. Nontrainer types, if they do attempt to train, are doing so to obtain the *product,* the end result. The process is often boring, frustrating, or mystifying to these folks. Those who have the means might very well outsource the training job to a professional.

If you think about it, this isn't surprising. Some people love cooking, while others cook only insofar as they must eat and are unable to afford restaurant

meals every night. Some love to sew, tinker with cars, read, or hit the gym. Others are solely after the product of these endeavors. The rub is this: product seekers, those who do not become engaged even a little with the process of any task that requires significant time investment, famously peter out unless they have unearthly and steely discipline. Successful animal training is notoriously perseverance intensive. This is partly why the world is full of untrained dogs.

MY AGENDA

I have three primary objectives with this program:

1. **To get you to do it.** Not just to acquire the technical know-how, but to actually do the legwork. Dog training is *expensive* behavior (in terms of time and energy) for people. There is more than one behavior to train. Each one requires many steps and a lot of repetition. The fruits of the labor come, but not immediately—exactly the kind of task that so often produces procrastination and quitting. So I have my work cut out for me.

2. **To get you to drop any detrimental baggage you might be carrying in your head about motivating your dog.** (See "The Not-So-Awful Truth about Motivation" later in this introduction.) No motivation, no training. Well-meaning but ill-informed trainers have misled generations of owners about this. Most trainers lack formal education in animal learning, a subject with sixty years of relevant research. Nevertheless, dog owners have a right to greater competence.

3. **To give you fail-safe progressions for the important behaviors that most people want.** Most people do not have time to bone up on all relevant animal learning principles and derive from them sound training plans. Luckily, efficient recipes—fleshed out training progressions—already exist for the big ticket behaviors: sit, down, stay, come when called, and so on. These have been vetted on hundreds of dogs at the academy and thousands of dogs in private settings, so you will not have to reinvent the wheel.

Getting Enough Training In

My guess is that some—maybe even a lot—of you have a little spark of latent trainer inside; that capacity for fascination with the process, since you did buy a dog-training book and DVD. The good news is that once you start to get it,

the process of animal training is spectacularly fascinating, up there with any wonder of the universe you could name. I therefore have no doubt that some of you will "get the bug." You haven't up until now because how it all works has been too mysterious. I will try very hard to make it clear.

For those of you who are destined to remain immune to the training bug, my goal will be to cheerlead you through the early stages so you become a competent trainer, in spite of your disinterest in the process. Because for you the rewards are not *in*trinsic—the process itself will be a chore—the rewards will have to be *ex*trinsic. We'll need a training regime for you, along with the one for your dog.

Watching the DVD one time all the way through before starting to train may get you "itchy" to try it yourself. Humans are very good at absorbing through modeling. The bottom line is that even if you are a product-oriented person when it comes to training, you deserve a trained dog as much as the process-oriented people do.

MY PERSEVERANCE SELL-JOB

Most of the fruits of your labors will not be immediate, which will contrast starkly and unfavorably with much of your day-to-day life. With a few clicks, anyone in Western society can research any topic on the Internet, shop for any merchandise, or chat with people anywhere in the world about any subject, however esoteric, at any time of the day or night. If you get an urge to watch a particular movie, you can pick it up at an emporium down the street. You probably have a cell phone to give you instant contact with friends, family, and work associates, and you might eat a fair amount of fast food.
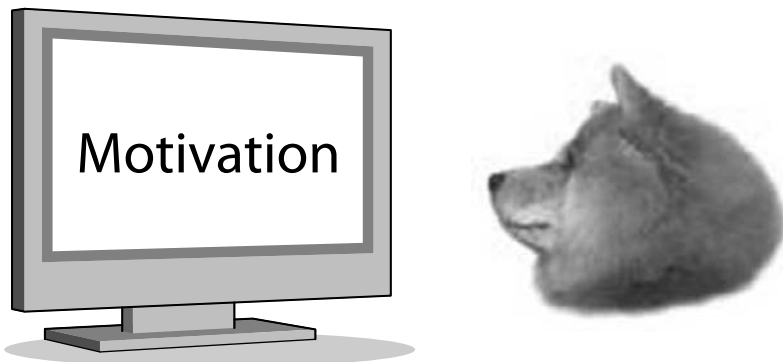
Whenever you see this picture of Buffy watching the monitor, it means to watch the corresponding section of the DVD before training.

Dog learning moves at biological speed. For this reason, I've often thought that dog training is a character-building endeavor. It forces us to slow from techno-speed back down to bio-speed. But however good for you this is, it will absolutely prove part of the challenge. I've seen countless people with terrific intentions not follow through with training their dogs. To have the best possible chance against the "waning peter-outs," I need to get you in the right frame of mind, armed with the right knowledge, and then incentivize to keep you going. If you hang on through the earliest, buggiest stages, you can get hooked.

There is a glossary in the back of the book that consists of techie training terms and definitions you'll see in the text. Although these terms are explained the first time they're used in the text, you can use the glossary as a cheat sheet in case you forget.

THE NOT-SO-AWFUL TRUTH ABOUT MOTIVATION

Motivation in dog training has been far too murky a topic for far too long. You may have been told that dogs have a desire to please, that they are pack animals who require leadership, which makes obedience fall into place, that you have to project the right *energy,* that you have to speak to the dog in his own language, and on and on. All this mumbo jumbo is usually the made-up shtick of someone trying to sell you their one-of-a-kind magical method, which they developed from some sort of natural gift.

These murky-motivation trainers rarely talk clearly about rewards and punishments. They will most certainly shun food, the most potent motivator in animal training. They'll first tell you that praise and projecting the right attitude is all that is needed. If you then test this by comparing training ease and outcomes achieved with each, the food will inevitably win hands down. At this point, a murky motivator will switch his rhetoric to a moral argument, that using food somehow corrupts the dog. He may try playing to your narcissism: that it is somehow superior to have your dog do it all for *you.* He may warn you that the dog will acquire a dependency on food.

What a murky motivator won't tell you—perhaps because he doesn't know or perhaps because the truth impacts sales—is that *all* animal training depends on consequences. Trainers who do not use powerful reward motivators such as food use other incentives instead, such as special collars, physical force, and intimidation. They may tell you that it's *energy* or *leadership* or some other murky-training buzzword, but, again, test it out. Give such a trainer a dog and ask him to train a behavior using this magical energy but without pinning the dog to the ground, striking him, or jerking him with some sort of collar, and see if it still works. Such trainers prey on your wish not to have to motivate

The Economics of Behavior

All properly functioning living animals, including us humans, spend their behavioral dollars wisely. For example, would you get up right now and run ten feet for five bucks? How about ten yards? Ten miles? Would you run ten miles for five hundred bucks? Five thousand? Notice that as the task gets more "expensive," you require a larger payoff to do it. Price points vary among different people, too. For some, running is cheaper than it is for others. Some people even find running *intrinsically* rewarding, meaning that the payoff is internal—their bodies and brains reward them for doing it, so no external payoff is needed.

Humans are very complex when it comes to the myriad reasons that drive us to behave. We will do things because "we should," because we enjoy reciprocating good deeds done for us in the past or in the service of complicated agendas. Luckily for the training cause, dog behavioral economics is much simpler. Even though dogs won't do things because "they should," all dogs have price points—usually very reasonable ones—for the different things we want them to do.

your dog, but it's a scam. All dogs must be motivated. No motivation, no training. This can be a tough pill to swallow if you've been sold the myth that it will all happen like *Lassie* on TV. (Lassie, by the way, was several food-trained dogs, who all got multiple takes.)

This is an important discussion because it gets at the heart of the matter: technical competence. Being misled by a trainer unversed in how animals learn is no different from being told by a self-taught, unschooled orthodontist that he didn't require a university education because he has a *natural gift* for teeth. It would be considered outrageous in any other field—general contracting, plumbing, aeronautical engineering. (Does anyone want to fly in a plane designed by someone self-taught with a natural gift, or would you prefer a plane designed by real engineers?) But in dog training, we fall for it over and over again.

To come up to speed about motivation, imagine your dog innocently posing two questions to you when you ask him to do something:

1. Why should I?

2. What do you want me to do?

The order of these questions is important. To change behavior, we must supply consequences. There are, broadly speaking, three choices: you can use rewards, use force, or use a combination of the two. People naturally gravitate

to whichever choice feels right to them. Dogs would be better served if we got savvier at spotting the murky language that obscures motivators and got a real answer to the following: does the trainer motivate with the carrot, the stick, or some of both?

I used to train with some of both, but for the past twenty years or so I have dropped force from my repertoire, mostly because I'm just not comfortable hurting or scaring dogs to train them. Luckily, I've not had to compromise the standard of training that I can achieve by training force free.

The method you're going to learn in this book is force free, which means that we will be identifying rewards and taking control of them, starting and stopping them to mold your dog's behavior like clay. We have to identify rewards because dogs vary in what motivates them strongly enough to train. We have to take control of rewards because if they are available for free, they are devalued. Animal trainers call this taking-control part *closing the economy* on a motivator.

It bears repeating: your dog will not work for nothing. No normal animal will work for nothing. For generations, dog owners have been sold a lie, which is that dogs will work for free, or just to please you. It's just not true. All along, if you look closely, there were always motivators: rewards, force, or the threat of force.

BASIC REWARDS FOR INSTALLATION

To efficiently install obedience, you'll need to crank out many repetitions, rewarding your dog after each one. Dog training is a bit like weight training in this way—the more you do, the stronger the behavior (or muscle) gets. So, for installation purposes, you need a reward or two that your dog will work for over and over.

Animal trainers have historically used food for this purpose because it can be quickly doled out in small pieces, and all animals will work for it (the animals who are not at all motivated by food are dead—of starvation). So food is our ace in the hole for basic installations. Audition different kinds of food to identify what your dog likes enough to work for. Your choices need to be a kind of food that can be broken up into tiny pieces and of a type you feel comfortable giving in substantial quantities. Some dogs will work for their kibble. Some dogs will work a bit for kibble but need something racier for more *expensive* behaviors. This is perfectly fine. See the "Auditioning Food Rewards" sidebar for suggestions. Find what works.

Now list any kinds of patting or physical contact your dog enjoys. These are usable rewards for some dogs some of the time.

> ### *Auditioning Food Rewards*
>
> These are the food rewards the pros use most of the time. Use whatever your dog is really keen for.
>
> - Salami-style shrink-wrapped dog food, such as Natural Balance, finely diced
> - Dried chicken strips, (available at most pet retailers), broken up into small (quarter-inch) pieces
> - Any small, nutritious, commercially available dog treat
> - Beef jerky, broken up into tiny pieces
> - Cheerios
> - Cold cuts cut into very small pieces
> - Tiny diced cheese cubes

Another quick-and-clean motivator to audition is praise. Try high-pitched cheering, baby talk, mushy lovey-dovey voices, and whatever else you think might work. Some dogs will work for praise. Some dogs will work temporarily for praise and then need an upgrade, and others, although they might quite like praise, find it an insufficient payoff for the expensive things we'll be asking them to do. This is also perfectly fine. We will upgrade as needed without hesitation. Remember: *always* use motivators that really work.

Some dogs are toy maniacs, which grants us another reward option. Dogs who like fetch or tug games but aren't obsessed with them are not the dogs I'm talking about when I say "toy maniac." I mean the ones who will madly fetch over and over without ever getting bored or who will play tug endlessly. Trainers call these dogs *high drive* or *drivey*. Border Collies are the poster children, but plenty of breeds and individuals are toy addicted.

In terms of the training mechanics, using toys instead of food or praise will slow you down some: you've got to deliver a round of the game and then get the toy back for the next repetition. Using toys is clunkier than squealing or quickly giving a food reward, but if your dog will perform lots of repetitions for this, it's a usable motivator. If it slows you down too much, switch to food and praise and use toys as consolidators. We'll be bringing in maintenance and consolidator rewards later in the process.

Professional trainers usually store their rewards in a bait pouch, which is like a fanny pack with a lining to hold food. Because it's important to get the reward to the dog quickly (so he doesn't do another action in the meantime) but present a natural-looking picture to the dog—you without food in your

hand—a bait pouch is very handy and convenient. When your dog is more advanced, you'll be using maintenance rewards, which you don't need to keep on your person, and a few food rewards, which you can easily hide in a pocket. But for efficient early installation, get yourself a bait pouch.

UPPING THE DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY SYSTEMATICALLY

One of the secrets of really effective trainers is their careful attention to the level of difficulty. What exactly does the dog have to do to be *paid* (trainer-speak for *rewarded*)? If it's too easy, the dog is successful and keeps trying, but progress is minimal, kind of like a child who masters the recitation of the alphabet but is never pushed to read simple words and, later, books. If it's too difficult, the dog rarely wins, is rarely paid, and so quits. Hand the average second-grader *War and Peace* and they won't get very far. Both these extremes are inefficient. The Goldilocks Zone of training is setting the level of difficulty so that the dog makes constant gains and wins enough to stay very interested. In other words, we want an ever-increasing level of difficulty without losing the dog—that is, having him quit because it's too hard.

Many trainers use their judgment to decide when to make things harder (*raising criteria*), but I strongly recommend being more systematic and using rules to decide when to make it harder, when to keep practicing at the current level, and when to back off and make it easier. We're therefore going to use a system called *Push, Drop, Stick*. You are going to do five repetitions in a row of an exercise and keep track of how many of those five your dog does correctly. Based on how he performs on those five repetitions (*trials*), you will do one of the following:

Push—go on to the next level of difficulty

Drop—back down to the previous level of difficulty

Stick—stay at the current level of difficulty and do more repetitions

This system is summarized in the following grid:

	How Many Did He Get Right Out of Five Repetitions?	Do What?	Why?
Push	Five out of five	Make it harder.	He's proven himself proficient at the current level.
Drop	Zero, one, or two out of five	Make it easier.	He's about to quit—this level is too hard for him right now.
Stick	Three or four out of five	Do another set of five at this level of difficulty.	He doesn't need you to Drop but he's not ready for a Push yet.

So, when you're doing the exercises, wherever it says something like, "If he doesn't do it, cancel the trial/reward and try again," that particular repetition counts as a zero. If it were the first one in your set of five, you'd be *0 for 1*. If he got the next one right, you'd be *1 for 2,* and so on.

The important thing is that you use the system. Being organized and objective is good animal training. If you prematurely push because you are *subjectively* sure that he's got it, it will be at best inefficient and at worst, your dog will quit. If you're overly cautious, your instinct may be to stick endlessly, which is also inefficient. So, always train in sets of five repetitions. Count how many he gets out of five and then implement a push, a drop, or a stick.

Before a training session, read ahead so you have a good idea of the upcoming steps on any command. View the DVD examples to help visualize your mechanics. You will also find homework sheets on the DVD, which you can print to help keep you organized. There is one for each of the obedience behaviors as well as a blank sheet for tricks and other behaviors you want to train.

Most of all, be very forgiving of yourself and of your dog. In the learning of any new physical skill, perfectionism is the enemy. It will paralyze you when you need to be loose and relaxed. In a force-free method like this, there are no lethal errors you can make.

OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAM

We're going to train in four stages. An ideal training session will include a little work on each behavior in whatever stage you're in. So your first session might consist of *Sit I, Sit II, Down I, Down II,* and *Come I,* depending on how much time you have. You can work every day, twice a week, once a week, or randomly,

whenever you have the chance. Your dog won't forget the previous lesson. The only hard and fast rules are that:

- You faithfully use your Push-Drop-Stick system.
- Your dog has at least one nap or overnight sleep between training sessions. Think of the training session as the *data entry* part of the project and the next sleep period as the *processing* of the information from the training session. There is very good evidence that in a number of species, including humans, learning progresses optimally on this kind of schedule.

Part One: Fundamental Behaviors

- *Sit* and *Watch*
- *Down*
- *Come*
- Some Help if You're Struggling

Part Two: Impulse-Control Behaviors

- *Sit-Stay* and *Down-Stay*
- *Wait* and *Leave It*
- Walking on Leash

Part Three: Maintaining and Improving

- Mixing It Up
- Taking It on the Road
- Social Applications
- Consolidation and Maintenance

Part Four: Advanced Behaviors

- Heeling
- Mat Training
- *Retrieve*
- *Sit Pretty* and *Roll Over*

PART ONE

Fundamental Behaviors

The four behaviors we will start with are straightforward to train and high on most owners' request list. They are:

- Sit
- Watch
- Down
- Come

If you work on these behaviors, you'll reap a number of benefits:

- Even if you train no further than this, your dog will have a repertoire that will cover you for a variety of day-to-day applications. Sitting and lying down can replace jumping on people or begging at the table. Asking your dog to sit and watch can get you out of innumerable jams while out on walks. She won't strain at or bark at people or dogs on the street if she's sitting and watching. Finally, if your dog comes when called, she can be granted off-leash access, which in turn physically and mentally tires him, the cornerstone to prevention of behavior problems.
- Both you and your dog will "learn to learn" from what are usually the easiest behaviors to train. Your timing, mechanics, and other skills will be honed for you to tackle the rest of the behaviors in this program, or any behaviors you opt to train, for that matter. In your dog's case, she'll be past the raw, greenhorn stage in time for the more complex behaviors.
- *Sits* and *Downs* are prerequisites for *Stays*.

I'm going to assume that you're using food rewards like the vast majority of animal trainers. If you're not, wherever you see *feed* or *pay* or

deliver the food reward, substitute your praise or toy. As I stated earlier, there are some dogs who will work for the opportunity to play tug for a few seconds, or for you to throw a retrieve object. And there are some of you owners who are still very reluctant to food-train and want to try praise. This is fine with the following proviso: If your rewards aren't working very well—the dog should be keen and focused on trying to get some—upgrade to something that works.

Chapter 1

Sit and Watch

By simply asking your dog to "sit" and "watch," you can preempt nuisance behaviors, such as jumping on people, or pulling on the leash toward people, dogs, or other distractions.

SIT

Some dogs, because of the way they're built or because of prior training, will sit early on. It might also be that you're a mechanical marvel as a trainer! Anyway, if your dog performs five out of five sits at any point, skip ahead to *Sit VII* and resume training from there.

Sit I

1. Hold a food reward over your dog's head so that she has to crane her neck straight up to sniff it or nibble at it. Make her stretch on tippy-toes, but don't hold it so high that she jumps. Keep it still—don't back her up with it.
2. Count to two seconds and then give it to her while she's still craning. If she drops her head, cancel the reward (snatch it back) and start over.
3. She doesn't need to sit yet (although she might—bonus!)—right now we're paying neck craning.

   Push on five for five.

Sit II

1. Do the same neck-crane game but for four seconds this time. Remember to keep the reward still over your dog's head—don't back her up or dance her around with the food lure.
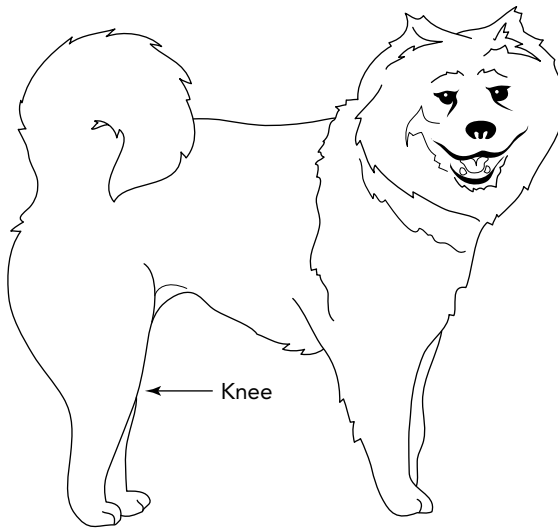
Knee

2. If you see her back end go down into a partial (or full!) Sit at any point, pay early—right when her knees bend (when the rear goes down into a partial Sit).

Push-Drop-Stick Review

It's extremely important not to go on to the next step until your dog does a set of five in a row correctly. Follow the progression and the Push-Drop-Stick rules faithfully to avoid a flimsy foundation. Now is the time to set up a habit of training systematically, like a pro. Stick with the system however fabulous you think your judgment is. Only a five out of five means that you've built a strong enough response to push to the next level. Until the response is this strong, stick to the current level or drop, depending on the numbers.

In the case of *Sit I*, complete five two-second neck cranes, rewarding after each one before pushing to *Sit II*. If your dog does three or four out of five, do another set. That's a stick. If she does it only once or twice or not at all, that's a drop. In this case, as it's the first exercise, drop back to a *one*-second neck crane, get five in a row of those, and then push to the two-second version in *Sit I*. And don't worry about it. Just keep building.

Remember, we push on five out of five correct; stick on three or four out of five; and drop on zero, one, or two out of five.

Can't I Just Squish Her into a Sit?

Getting the dog to sit bit by bit using a food prompt may seem like a lot of effort. This short-term pain will yield massive long-term gain, however, because the food-prompt method teaches the dog to use *her own muscles* to do the action. Another reason that pushing and pulling your dog into a Sit slows down learning is that all animals have an immediate emotional reaction to being shoved or restrained in any way. Gary Wilkes, a well-known trainer, uses the human analogy of having a pro help you with your golf swing by standing behind you, wrapping his arms around you, and clasping your wrists in order to guide your swing. If you can imagine this vividly enough, your mind won't be on your swing; instead, you'll be thinking, "Eek, too close, too close, get off me." Your dog will have a similar reaction to being manipulated in this fashion. It slows down learning by stressing her out.

3. If you don't see any partial Sit, pay fair and square at the end of four seconds. Either an early pay for a knee-bend or a four-second crane counts as a correct response in your Push-Drop-Stick decisions.

Push on five for five.

Sit III

1. Repeat the neck-crane game for eight seconds.

2. Look for any knee bending and pay early if you get any.

3. If eight seconds is too long—you'll know this is the case if your dog quits trying to sniff and nibble the food prompt over her head—and if she keeps getting four seconds perfectly, do a *split*. Split the difference between four and eight, and make her neck crane for six seconds. When she does it five for five successfully, push to eight again.

Push on five for five.

Sit IV

1. Do another round of the neck-crane game until your dog bends her knees, however long it takes.

2. Look for any small increases in the amount of bend—try to reward at the moment of deepest knee bend. Pay close attention because timing really counts—reward exactly when she does the knee bend. If she quits, drop to *Sit II* or *III*.

Push on five for five.

Sit V

1. Hold out for deeper knee bends.

2. Choose your moment of reward carefully—timing is critical in dog training. Catch that bend.

Push on five for five.

Sit VI

1. Hold out for a full sit.

2. Remember to cancel the reward if your dog jumps or backs up.

Push on five for five.

Sit VII

1. Now put the reward in your other hand and keep it behind your back.

2. Do the motion as in *Sit VI* but without the reward in your hand.

3. Praise your dog and pay immediately from your other hand as soon as she sits.

Verbal Commands: No Rush

One of the biggest errors of novice trainers is the tendency to *chant* commands ("Sit, sit, sit, SIT!"). Expert trainers do not even introduce verbal commands until a behavior is far along—in the case of *Sit IX*. So, once your dog performs reliably for a hand signal, start placing the verbal command *before*—always before, never during, never after—the hand signal. This way, the verbal *predicts* the learned signal and results in a Pavlov's Dog effect over time—the dog starts responding to the verbal cue as she did to the hand signal. You'll notice that when you train more advanced behaviors later on, a great deal of training takes place before you give it a name—that is, start using a verbal command.

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4. Pay while she is still sitting so that she eats in a sit—this is called *feeding for position*.

5. Ignore her (stand still) if she goes sniffing at the hand behind your back.

Push on five for five.

Sit VIII

1. The reward is still in your other hand behind your back.

2. Do a faster motion with your command hand, like a scoop upward—this is the hand signal for *Sit*.

3. Praise and pay, feeding for position when your dog sits.

Push on five for five.

Sit IX

1. *Before* you do the motion, say "Sit."

2. Wait a *full second* or two.

3. Now do the motion.

4. Praise and feed for position when your dog sits.

Push on five for five.

Sit X

1. Say "Sit."
2. If your dog sits, pay, feeding for position.
3. If she doesn't sit within three seconds, give her the motion, and when she sits, praise but don't feed. When you need to give her the hand signal, it doesn't count as a correct response. Pay only when she responds after the verbal cue.

   Push on five for five.

WATCH

Watch is defined as the dog making and maintaining eye contact with the trainer. It has the great virtue of delivering high bang for the buck in terms of skill acquisition in the trainer along with practical benefit.

Watch I

Load your hand with two treats.

1. Ask your dog to sit using your verbal cue, and pay when she does.
2. Draw the second treat from her nose smoothly up to your eyes. As soon as her eyes meet yours, smile, praise, and pay her with that treat.
3. If she pops out of her sit, such as to jump up toward the lure, cancel the reward and start over. She needs to both watch and collect her payment in the sit position.

   Push on five for five.

Watch II

1. This time, load your nonsignal hand with two treats. Keep it behind your back except to pay.
2. Ask your dog to sit and pay when she does.

3. Draw your signal hand up to your eyes as you did in *Watch I* but without the treat in it. As soon as your dog's eyes meet yours, smile, praise, and pay her with the treat from your other hand. Feed for position: she must collect in a sit with her head tilted up.

4. If she breaks her sit, such as to go looking behind your back, cancel the reward and start over.

5. Repeat this process in every room of your house. Be sure not to be greedy with the duration—pay her *as soon as* she makes eye contact.

Push when your dog is five for five in every room of your house.

What Should I Do in a Training Session?

Regardless of your dog's level of proficiency, every training session should start with a quick warm-up consisting of a bit of review. Before starting any new steps, do a few repetitions at the level your dog was last at. Let's say, for example, that you do a ten-minute session consisting of:

> *Sit VII, VIII, and IX*
> *Down I, II, III, and IV*
> *Watch I*

At the beginning of your next session, before attempting *Sit X*, do a few repetitions of *Sit IX*. Likewise, before trying *Down V* or *Watch II*, warm up your dog with a bit of *Down IV* and *Watch I*, respectively.

Short sessions—from five to thirty minutes—with rest time in between them are best. Always try to quit before either you or the dog are fed up.

There's some difference of opinion among professional trainers about whether it's necessary to end sessions "on a good note"—that is, after a particularly fine repetition. Some trainers have put forward the notion that ending on a good note helps the dog remember the session better. Others point out that dogs get very hooked on training and the end of a session is usually a bit of a disappointment to them, so ending on a good repetition would punish this better-than-average performance. Therefore, they say, you should end on a poor effort so the dog will try harder next time in order to be trained longer. Still other trainers go in with a set itinerary of how many steps they want to do of various behaviors and simply end when they reach their goals.

My recommendation to you is to keep sessions short, don't agonize about which exact repetition you end on, and work on what you want to work on as long as you are faithful to the Push-Drop-Stick rule and you do the steps in order.

Checking In: Are You Getting Hooked or Not?

After a few sessions, you'll have some idea of whether or not the process of training is inherently rewarding for you. Signs that you're a trainer-to-be are:

- You don't find yourself procrastinating—you look forward to training.
- You do two or more sessions a day.
- Your sessions often go on for longer than the time you budgeted to practice—the time seems to just fly by.
- You find yourself talking to anyone who will listen about how animals learn or how neat it is watching your dog catch on.
- You find yourself scouring supermarkets or high-end pet stores to find new rewards so you can do extra training.
- You do extra reading on training.

If this sounds like you, it is likely you won't need external motivators to get you to do sessions. The only pitfall for you is the slightly lowered efficiency of training more than necessary to get robust and snappy obedience.

Watch III—Two for One

1. Load your nonsignal hand with one treat.

2. Ask your dog to sit. As soon as she does, go right into *watch*—don't pay the sit.

3. Give her the signal as you did in *Watch II.* As soon as her eyes meet yours, smile, praise, and pay her, feeding for position: in a sit with her head upward facing toward you.

Rewards for You if You're Avoiding Training
or Finding It a Chore

It might turn out that you're avoiding training, "never have time," or feel frustrated or bored by the whole thing. First things first: *no guilt.* You're not morally inferior or some sort of failure if we need to incentivize you to train your dog. Training is a practical endeavor, not a moral purity contest, and there are no better or higher reasons for doing it than others.

Let's set up some extrinsic reward system to get you training a bit more. As soon as your dog is five for five at the following milestones, check the

box so you can collect the corresponding prize. For some prizes, you have to complete more than one level. Needless to say, it's important that the rewards be meaningful to you, so substitute alternatives if my suggestions aren't motivating. You'll probably find that these things are more fun earned than if you had allowed yourself to have them for free.

Reward Yourself!					
	Sit I, II, & III	Sit IV & V	Sit VI	Sit VII–X	Watch I–III
Check Once Completed					
What You Win	Call or e-mail a friend to complain about having to train— be very specific	Goodly dose of favorite chocolate bar or salty snack	Surf a new website	Ten-minute stretch or neck rub by significant other	Read a guilty-pleasure magazine on sofa

It is vital to keep going in these early stages, where you're practicing new tasks that you feel unsure of.

Chapter 2

Down

Complete at least up to *Sit VI* before starting *Down*.

DOWN

After coming when called, lying down on cue is probably the most frequently requested behavior among owners. In fact, if you polled people and asked them to describe what a well-behaved dog looked like in a domestic setting, they'd probably say that the dog was politely lying down while the family watched TV, conversed, or ate dinner. It's also fun to train.

Down I

1. Be ready with two food rewards: one for *Sit* and one for *Down*.

2. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.

3. Right after paying, use the second treat to bring your dog's nose straight down to the floor between his front paws. Move your hand slowly, and once it's on the floor freeze there.

4. If your dog stays in his sit and follows the treat down to the ground with his nose, pay.

5. If he stands abruptly, cancel and start over, always paying the setup *Sit*. Your dog will likely stand the first few times. Be ready to cancel quickly so he really feels a cause and effect between standing and the treat disappearing abruptly. Timing is an important training skill.
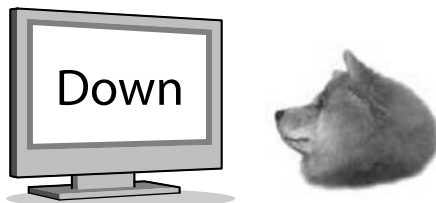
   Push on five for five.

"Shopping": Scoping for Your Next Push

Notice how in *Down III* you're looking for approximations of a real down while your dog's doing the nose-down-while-sitting game. Even though officially you're paying him for four seconds of targeting with his nose down, you're looking for previews of future steps. Trainers call this *shopping.* Later on you'll use shopping much more to troubleshoot problems and to build more advanced behaviors.

Down II

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position (this will continue to strengthen the *Sit*).
2. Draw his nose down to the floor again, and this time make him sniff or nibble for two seconds before paying—feed for position here, too, letting go of the treat while his head is still down.
3. Cancel abruptly if he stands.

   Push on five for five.

Down III

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.
2. Make him work the target (sniff and nibble the food reward) on the floor for four seconds before paying—look for any crumpling of his front end or bending of front legs. We need to develop your eye for seeing crumples and leg bends.
3. Feed after four seconds.
4. Cancel if he stands.

   Push on five for five.
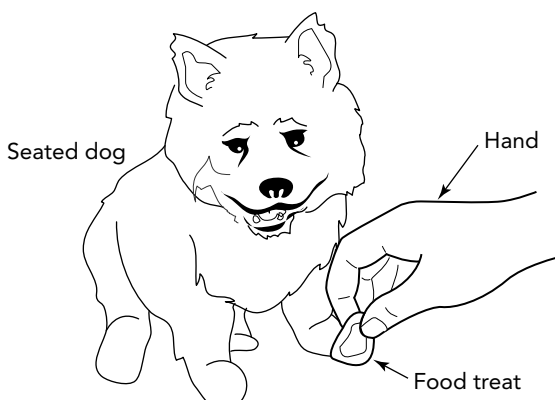
Holding the food reward on the floor to work toward lying down.

Down IV

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.
2. Make him work the target on the floor for eight seconds while you shop (observe) for body crumples and front leg bends.
3. If he crumples or bends even a little, pay early, as soon as he does it.
4. If he doesn't crumple or bend, pay after the eight seconds are up.
5. Cancel if he stands.

Push on five for five.

Down V

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.
2. Hold out for a crumple or bend now, however long it takes.
3. Pay the instant your dog crumples or bends (it may be slight, so watch closely).
4. Don't forget to cancel if he stands.

Push on five for five.

Down VI

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.

2. Hold out for more of a crumple or bend—watch closely.

3. Pay as soon as your dog crumples or bends, canceling as usual if he stands.

Push on five for five.
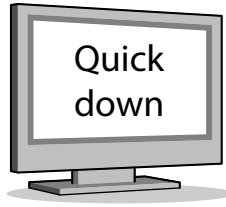
Down VII

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.

2. Hold out for a full down now.

3. Pay your dog handsomely as soon as he lies down, canceling if he stands.

Push on five for five.

Down VIII

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.

2. Move your luring hand more quickly to the floor now.

Splitting: When You Need Something in Between

Let's say that on *Down VII*, it takes your dog too long to lie down and he quits. Working the target for that long was "too expensive" a behavior. So you drop to *Down VI*, which he does easily. You then push to *Down VII* again, but it's still too hard. This is your cue to find something in between *Down VI* and *Down VII*—what trainers call a *split*.

A good split here is to load your hand with three treats: one for the *Sit*, one for the final *Down*, and one to give partway through the *Down* process to keep your dog working. You can choose a moment of particularly nice crumple/bend or pay him chiefly for his perseverance at working the target for ten seconds or more.

3. If your dog lies down within two seconds, pay him while he's still down. If he works the treat but doesn't lie down (or stands), cancel.

Push on five for five.

Down IX

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.
2. Put the reward in your other hand behind your back and do the *Down* motion the same way as in Step *VIII* but without the treat in it—a hand signal.
3. Pay from your other hand as soon as your dog lies down.
4. Give him as long as he needs to lie down, but cancel if he stands. Feed for position (he eats while lying down).

Push on five for five.

Down X

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.
2. With the pay in your other hand behind your back again, do your hand signal but this time don't lower your hand all the way to the floor—do the movement to about your knee level, giving your dog as long as he needs to lie down but always canceling if he stands.

He Won't Get Out of His Down *for the Next Repetition. What Do I Do?*

Some dogs pop up at the end of every repetition, which conveniently sets you up for the next trial. Some dogs remain in the down after being paid. It's best to jolly such dogs out of position with movement and voice. Perform the next trial a few feet away, which will naturally require your dog to get up. This is a nice problem to have, by the way, as it bodes well for the upcoming *Down-Stay*. It suggests that staying is not an expensive behavior for your dog.

3. Wait for him to lie down and pay as soon as he does, feeding for position from your other hand.

Push on five for five.

Down XI

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.
2. Reduce your hand signal for *Down* still further—to your midthigh.
3. Pay your dog when he lies down, feeding for position and canceling if he stands.
4. If your dog has trouble with this (you get between zero and two out of five), split: try a signal to just above your knee (between *Down X* and *XI*). Then retry *Down XI*.

Push on five for five.

Down XII

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.
2. Say "Down" and wait a full second or two.
3. Reduce your hand signal even more—to your hip level (stand straight now).
4. Pay when your dog lies down, feeding for position and canceling if he stands.

Push on five for five.

Down XIII

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.
2. Say "Down" and wait a full second or two.
3. Give a smaller hand signal—faster and with less movement.

Sequence Reminder

1. Say "Down."
2. Wait one to two seconds.
3. Give the hand signal.
4. Wait for the behavior.
5. The dog lies down.
6. Pay in position.

4. Pay when your dog lies down, feeding for position and canceling if he stands.

   Push on five for five.

Down XIV

1. *Sit* your dog and feed for position.
2. Say "Down" and wait for him to lie down.
3. Pay as soon as he lies down.
4. If he doesn't lie down within three seconds, give him a hand signal. Praise but don't feed when he lies down. Then repeat the exercise.

   Push to the next exercise when he's five for five with the verbal command only.

DOWN FROM A STAND

So far, your dog has been going down from the sit position. Now it's time to teach him to lie down on cue from a standing position, which is different. Humans tend not to empathize because lying down is a concept we instantly recognize regardless of what position came before it. But for your dog, lying down is a set of muscle movements, and the set of movements a dog makes when lying down from a sit is not the same set of movements he makes when he lies down from a stand.

Down from a Stand I

1. Be ready with a supply of rewards behind your back.
2. If your dog automatically sits as soon as you start training, move away from him to get him out of the sit before giving the *Down* signal.
3. As soon as your dog is standing, do a *Down* hand signal all the way to the floor, as you did way back in *Down IX*.
4. If he sits, pull your hand away, take a few steps back to get him out of the sit, and try again.

5. As soon as he lies down, praise and reward him, feeding for position.

6. Jolly him out of the down and repeat.

  Push on five for five.

It's okay if your dog does a really brief sit on the way to lying down. Some dogs lie down from a stand back end first, and others lie down front end first. If your dog commits to a sit, however, cancel the reward and start over.

Down from a Stand II

1. Be ready with your rewards behind your back.

2. Get your dog standing and give him a *Down* signal at knee height, not all the way to the floor.

3. If he does nothing or commits to a sit, end the trial and start over.

4. As soon as he lies down, praise him and reward from your stash behind your back, feeding for position.

  Push on five for five.

Down from a Stand III

1. Repeat the same exercise, but this time deliver your *Down* signal without bending at the waist.

2. Cancel the trial if your dog sits, and try again.

3. As soon as he lies down, praise and feed for position.

  Push on five for five.

Down from a Stand IV

1. Say "Down," wait a full second or two, and then do your small hand signal.

2. If your dog lies down on the verbal cue, pay right away, feeding for position.

3. If he needs the hand signal, it's okay; reward this too for now.

4. If he sits, cancel the trial, get him standing, and try again.

Down from a Stand V

1. Say "Down" and wait.

2. If your dog lies down within three seconds, praise and pay, feeding for position.

3. If he doesn't lie down (if he sits or remains standing), cancel the trial and try again.

Push to *Down-Stay* in Part II on page 63 on five for five.

SIT FROM A DOWN

Sit from a Down is different from *Sit from a Stand*. Rather than bending his knees, your dog now has to pull his front end up. Here's how to instill this behavior.

Holding a food lure at the height at which the dog's head will be when the dog sits.

Sit from a Down I

1. Verbally cue your dog to lie down and pay him when he does.

2. While he's down, put a food lure at his nose and move it straight up and back a little so that he must crane his neck straight up and slightly back to look at it (do not move the target forward—doing so will prompt a stand).

3. Freeze the lure at his (sitting) head height, and wait. Don't redo the movement. Just freeze.

4. When your dog sits, pay, being sure that he consumes his reward in a sit.

5. If he stands, cancel the reward and start over at Step 1.

   Push on five for five.

Sit from a Down II

1. Cue your dog to lie down and reward him when he does.

2. Load rewards in your nonsignal hand and put that hand behind your back.

3. With no food in your other hand, deliver a signal identical to the movement you did in *Sit from a Down I*.

> ### *Are You Remembering to Drop When Necessary?*
>
> Dropping is a normal part of training, not a symptom that something is wrong. If your dog gets zero to two out of five, drop and redo the previous step.

4. Freeze in that position until your dog sits—give him as long as he needs.

5. When he sits, praise and pay from your other hand, feeding for position.

6. If he stands, cancel and start over.

   Push on five for five.

Sit from a Down III

1. Cue your dog to lie down and reward him for doing so.

2. Say "Sit," wait a full two seconds, and then deliver the hand signal as in *Sit from a Down II*. Freeze.

3. When he sits, praise and feed in position.

4. Push to *Sit from a Down IV* after *two* sets of five for five—in other words, ten for ten.

Push on ten for ten.

Sit from a Down IV

1. Cue your dog to lie down and reward him when he does so, feeding for position as usual.

2. Say "Sit" and wait five seconds.

3. If he sits, praise warmly and pay.

4. After five seconds without a sit, cancel and start over.

5. If your dog flinches as though intending to sit but seems unsure, give him the hand signal (which rewards his tiny intention behavior) and pay him when he sits.

Chapter 3

Come

Come, or *Recall,* is actually easy to train—much less complicated than *Sit, Down,* or *Stay.* The key is the massive payoff and the novel-to-novel connection in early training. The massive payoff is the much larger-than-usual reward for early instances of the behavior. *Novel-to-novel* refers to your careful orchestration of a new sound to this bountiful and new reward—which adds even more value.

Come I

1. Obtain a completely out-of-this-world reward, something your dog has never had and that you would bet a thousand bucks he will absolutely love. I recommend a handful of cubed pecorino Romano cheese, a generous serving of BBQ chicken breast with the skin still on, one of those small plastic containers of Gorgonzola cheese, or a deli pack of roast beef. Think big.

2. Decide on a recall cue that is a sound your dog has never heard—for example, a trilling jungle sound or a bird imitation. It's important that the cue be brand-new to your dog. Don't test it out—the first time your dog hears it, it *must* be followed up with the killer reward you've chosen.

3. Pack five servings of your amazing reward in plastic bags or food storage containers.

4. Once a day, hide a serving of the special reward near you (and out of reach of your dog). If your dog alerts to it, wait until he gives up. Now wait at least a half-hour.

5. When your dog is not paying attention, make the new sound—loud and long. Wait a second or two. Then, wherever he is (he may come over to investigate, he may simply cock his head, or he may not even be in the room!), give him the full serving of the brand-new, knock-his-socks-off reward. Praise him as he eats it, and then simply walk away and ignore him. If you are in the mood, play with him for a few minutes. Wait at least one day before repeating this exercise.

   Push after five repetitions.

Novel-to-Novel Conditioning

In almost all training, the first task is to get the behavior, just as you did for *Sit* and *Down.* In the case of a recall—*Come*—we're going to do a preliminary step that's based on Pavlovian association-style conditioning before we start asking for the behavior. We're going to have the novel sound you chose predict a novel and stunningly fabulous treat. In some cases, this simple step will buy a free (that is, virtually no labor for you!) recall. In all cases, it will lay a super-solid foundation for this most critical of behaviors.

From now on you will use normal-sized rewards. You can use the same fabulous stuff from *Come I* but in small, training-sized pieces, or whatever you have successfully used in training *Sit* and *Down.* Or a mix.

Come II: The "Premack Recall"

For this exercise, you'll need either

- a helper, or
- a table or countertop high enough that your dog can't access it (your dog should smell what's up there but be unable to get to it even if he jumps and reaches).
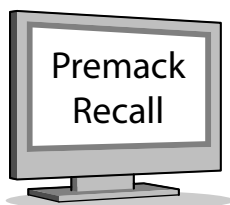
The best of all possible worlds would be to work on this exercise both ways—better generalization right off the bat.

With a Helper

1. Load a helper's hands with rewards (food or toy) and let your dog sniff and nibble but not have any. You'll need a helper who can withstand a dog nibbling and harassing her hands.
2. Station yourself six feet away with no rewards on you—nothing in your pockets or hands and no bait pouch.

3. Make your novel sound *once* and then encourage your dog to come. *He will probably ignore you for several minutes.* No matter, keep up your voice prompting as your dog bugs your helper. Be enticing with your voice but don't repeat the cue.

4. Eventually—it might seem an eternity—your dog will give up on your helper and come over to you. No matter how long it has taken and how irritated you are, praise him when he does.

5. When your dog reaches you, hold onto him and pat and praise him. Immediately, your helper should zoom over to your position and reward your dog. It's okay—good in fact—that your helper, and not you, gives the reward, provided the dog is fed in position: at your location, while you're touching him.

6. Go back to your original positions, let your dog regravitate to your helper's nummy reward-filled hands, and do it again. Keep repeating even if your dog doesn't seem to get better from one time to the next. His bugging the helper will extinguish over time *because it won't work.*

Practice until your dog comes five times in a row without hesitation.

This may take many, many repetitions over a few sessions. Naps or an overnight between sessions will help.

At some point, your dog may start coming before you call him. This is fine—reward him.

Why Is It Called a Premack Recall?

The *Premack Recall* is named after psychologist David Premack. Premack was able to train laboratory animals to do unlikely behaviors in order to be rewarded with an opportunity to do preferred behaviors. For example, if a rat was in the mood to run on his exercise wheel, he could be trained to sip from his water bottle in order to unlock the wheel, even if he wasn't thirsty. Later, the same rat might want water and not be in the mood for exercise but do a round on his exercise wheel in order to unlock the water bottle. We humans are familiar with Grandma's Rule, which goes something like, "If you eat your broccoli, then you can have ice cream." *Come II* is Premack's weird physics for dogs.

With a High Surface

1. Put a pile of tasty treats on a high surface—high enough that your dog can't get at them but not so high that he can't tell they are there.

2. Station yourself six feet away with nothing on you—nothing in your pockets or hands and no bait pouch.

3. Make your novel sound *once* and then lay on the charm to get your dog to come. *He will probably ignore you completely for several minutes.* Keep up your prompting (without repeating the cue) no matter how much he ignores you and focuses on the surface you're using.

4. Eventually, your dog will give up and come to you. No matter how long it has taken and how irritated you are, praise him as he heads over. Once he gets partway to you, he may regravitate to the food location ("Oh, so you have nothing—I'm heading back to the counter . . ."). Perfectly fine. Prompt away. Eventually he'll come over for real. His attempt to access the food directly will start to diminish because it's not working.

5. When your dog reaches you, get a hold of him and praise him. Go over with him to the high surface, take a small helping of the reward, go back to your original position, and give it to him there. Be sure to feed for position.

6. Empty your hands and repeat the exercise.

Practice until your dog comes five times in a row with no hesitation.

This may take many, many repetitions over a few sessions. Naps or an overnight between sessions will help.

At some point, your dog may start coming before you call. This is fine—reward it.

What Does Your Dog Learn from This?

If you think about it, it's counterintuitive for a dog to obtain something by moving away from it. His entire life history has taught him that the best way to get something is to move toward it. In *Come II*, this idea is turned on its head. Your dog is going to learn some weird physics: move away to get something. The key message is that not only do you control the rewards on your person, but *you also control the rewards out there in the world*. If your dog would like to access good stuff out there in the world, the answer is not to ignore you and just try and take it. The answer is obedience.

> ## *"This Can't Possibly Work!" Some Cheerleading for You*
>
> In a perseverance-intensive exercise like this one, there is a big risk that you, the trainer, the most important player, will quit. Gratification is completely and utterly delayed in this exercise. You dutifully do it over and over, but your dog seems to gets no better. Sometimes he'll have a slightly better repetition or a really good one but then he'll go back to ignoring you when you call. *The temptation to give up will be great. Don't do it! Don't give up!* It will absolutely work if you keep repping it out.
>
> At first you'll see occasional better repetitions amidst slow, awful ones. Gradually over time, there will be more good repetitions among the ones where he ignores you seemingly forever. Finally, he will come immediately all the time. Part of the reason that trainers persevere with this exercise, aside from their love of the training process, is that they've seen it work many times so they are not training blind. If it's your first time trying something like this, you'll have to train on faith.

Come III

1. Repeat *Come II* in a new location.

2. Repeat *Come II* with a new reward.

3. Repeat *Come II* in a new location with another new reward.

4. Repeat *Come II* with a much greater distance between you and the dog.

Do five repetitions of each step.

Each new variation will temporarily wobble the behavior. This normal grist for the training mill is known as *proofing* an exercise in order to make it durable in a wider range of situations.

When your dog reliably does five out of five repetitions without hesitation for new and interesting rewards and in different places in your house, you're ready to take your recall on the road in Part III on page 93).

Chapter 4

Some Help if You're Struggling

You've made it this far. Rate how you currently feel about dog training:

1. It is interesting, easier, and more fun than I expected—I think I'm hooked.
2. I'm only reading so far, but my curiosity is piqued and I think I'm ready to train my dog.
3. It's interesting but complicated.
4. It's okay—I'm a persevering type—but there's no doubt it's a chore.
5. I'm dying here—I don't think there's any way I'm actually going to train my dog.

If you're a 1, a 2, or a 3, this is really, really good. Keep doing exactly what you're doing. If you're a 2, it will be interesting to see what happens once you start training: Will you scream up to a 1, roll along at a 3 for a while and then get the fever, or find doing it much more expensive than reading about it, rendering you a 4 or a 5? If you're a 3, you may stay there for a while but over time find yourself thinking about dog training, showing off the process to friends or family members, and kind of looking forward to doing each session. You're becoming a 1.

If you're a 4 or a 5, we need to administer some first aid, as you're in danger of quitting. Even if you are a 4, however disciplined a person you might be, you are statistically more likely to quit than someone who is getting at least somewhat caught up in the process. If you are a 5, you may have already begun procrastinating, skipping exercises, and making up your own rules to speed things up.

FIRST AID

First, identify your issue(s)—what do you hate? (Circle all that apply):

1. The time and labor involved—this is clearly expensive behavior for me.

2. Not feeling like I get it—it seems too complicated and/or I don't agree with the instructions or the philosophy.

3. It's boring—it just doesn't do anything for me.

4. I'm frustrated—my dog and I are not progressing as fast as I think we should.

Here is an outline of usual solutions to these typical new-trainer issues.

The Problem	Possible Solutions
Time and labor	Establish a reward system for yourself for practicing. Chunk the training into more manageable pieces. Bail out—hire a professional. Skip ahead and try one trick, and then go back to the basics. Enlist help—get a family member to prepare bait or take over other parts of the dog's upkeep, such as her exercise and grooming, so you can train exclusively.
Not feeling like I get it	Reread this book's introduction and watch the DVD a couple of times. Talk it out with someone who is a good listener and troubleshooter. Get on a dog-training e-mail list to obtain some social support and pointers. (See the "Get Support" section of this chapter.) Back-burner the actual training and read one of the dog-training resources recommended in the "Seek More Background Knowledge" section of this chapter.
Bored	Establish a reward system for yourself for practicing. Skip ahead and try one trick, and then go back to the basics. Train in very short sessions, such as during TV commercials only. Bail out—hire a professional.
Frustration at dog's progress	Ascertain whether everything is going as it should but just not meeting your cyberspeed expectations, or whether things are indeed moving slower than average. If it's the latter, then proceed by checking your technique: Are you using potent enough motivators? Have you thrown the Push-Drop-Stick rule out the window? Are you skipping steps? Are you training in a quiet enough location? (Your dog isn't ready for distracting locations yet.)

Here is a look at these solutions in more detail.

Establish a Reward System for the Trainer

If training is not shaping up to be intrinsically rewarding to you, we need to develop an economy that has extrinsic short-term payoffs for you. Just as you probably wouldn't show up to your job if you weren't getting paid or wash the dishes if it didn't make them clean, you are not going to engage in training your dog if it's expensive behavior without gain, specifically gain that *you* find rewarding.

Are any items on the list below things that you enjoy and would like to have more of?

An afternoon in a bookstore
A new pair of stylish jeans
A box of mail-order baklava
A facial
Dinner at a new restaurant
New cozy flannel sheets
Leaving work at lunch and napping
Having your car detailed
Other: _____

Interestingly, even things that you enjoy and get on a regular basis can feel more rewarding if they're earned and are rarer. Human beings are fascinating animals for whom a sense of accomplishment sweetens life's small pleasures. Choose one or two of the above, or something else you would love to have ahead of you, and vow to collect that indulgence once you complete a manageable chunk of dog training. Which brings us to . . .

Chunking: Shorter Assignments

One of the most studied phenomena in the field of learning is the economy between behavioral output and payoff derived. Subjects uniformly procrastinate on large, open-ended tasks. This is why you probably got around to *starting* to brush your teeth every day in college but procrastinated on *starting* to write a long term paper. Procrastination is neither rational nor logical, but it is very lawful. It even has a name in the animal-training biz: *delayed onset of long-duration task*.

If you've been procrastinating, this dog-training project may be looming too large. It needs to be chunked into manageable pieces. So! New rule: You may collect your indulgence *and* be off the dog-training hook for at least one week as soon as you complete *five* exercises. If you haven't started, do *Sit I–Sit V*. If you've started and petered out, do five exercises from the point at which you quit. Do your first session right now. Cut up your bait and get it over with.

Then, in a week (or sooner if you feel the urge come over you), do another five exercises for another clearly identified payoff. Then take stock. Do you feel any better about the training? Cycle back to the "First Aid" section above.

Another strategy that breaks training into chunks that feel doable is to use a specific daily occurrence as a prompt to practice. Behaviorist Dr. Ian Dunbar famously advised people to train during TV commercials. The age of digital video recorders has reduced the duration and frequency of commercial breaks, but you could still use the system by tacking on a set amount of training, such as two minutes or two sets, whenever you pause to go to the bathroom or get yourself a beverage.

Review the Material

Well-executed training involves a lot of attention to detail, so you have a lot of material to grasp. I know I do better at pretty much all new things if I look over the instructions more than once before proceeding. Consider rereading the entire section on a particular behavior, such as *Sit-Stay,* before taking another crack at it.

If you're having mechanical difficulties—such as where to put your hands, or how to do a movement—review the entire video. We primates are very good imitative learners, and the visual example will clear up more than any lengthy description can. A lot of people also find that they get itchy to train if they watch someone else training, which can help jump-start you if you're having trouble getting motivated.

Get Support

Training is generally a solo endeavor, which suits some people perfectly but causes others to stall. If you feel paralyzed because it's not clear exactly what you're supposed to do, or if you feel uninspired, sharing this feeling with other people is a good strategy. Articulating what's bugging you about the process to a good listener can be very liberating, even if that person doesn't know a whit about dog training.

If you're looking for answers that you can't find in this book or on the DVD, there are dog training e-mail lists galore. These lists are populated by people who are into training and usually are very generous with their time and knowledge. The main downside of this avenue is that you may get a wide variety of opinions, confusing you further. But if you're someone who doesn't mind sifting through a lot of information to feel like you have more of a handle on your training, the Internet can be a terrific resource.

Seek More Background Knowledge

My colleague at the academy, Janis Bradley, has thirty years of experience in adult education and the different learning styles people bring to the table. I have learned a great deal from her over the years, not the least of which is that some people are uncomfortable with how-to instructions; they want to understand the bigger picture before proceeding. This type of learner, called an *assimilator*, has relentless intellectual curiosity and needs to know *why* things work the way they do, the theory behind the how-to.

If this rings true for you, I think you will find the training much more engaging if you explore the subject of animal learning theory. My favorite textbook is titled *Psychology of Learning and Behavior*, Fifth Edition, by Barry Schwartz, Edward A. Wasserman, and Stephen J. Robbins (W. W. Norton, 2001). This comprehensive book is a gold mine. If a full textbook on animal learning seems too daunting, try *Excel-Erated Learning: Explaining in Plain English How Dogs Learn and How Best to Teach Them*, by Pamela J. Reid (James and Kenneth Publishers, 1996). It is not a formal text and is replete with training examples. You can read and ponder until you are eager to try training.

Try Another Method

Dog training is currently an unregulated field, with no enforced practice standards. The downside of this is that there is no consumer protection from incompetence and no dog protection from abuse. The upside is a very wide range of options, method-wise. If in spite of my attempt to convince you of the virtues of training using lots of rewards you still feel uncomfortable, there is the option of training with force. Make no mistake: the alternative to rewards is pain and fear. While there are people who will gladly take your money and sell you the idea that you can achieve results with energy, leadership, talking to the dog in dog language, or simply through the strength of your bond, it is an incontrovertible fact that without motivation there will not be behavior

change. My fervent hope is that you will embrace the building of behavior with rewards, but if you just can't bear rewarding your dog so much, you can opt for more coercion, as it is currently still legal to do so.

Delegate Other Dog-Care Chores

Twenty years ago it was commonly held that the main prerequisite for owning a dog was a big fenced yard. Now we know better. Dogs are not space intensive, they are time intensive. This is a rude collision with twenty-first century life. Throughout my career, I have been in awe at how people fit it all in. They have full-time jobs, kids with complex itineraries, and many responsibilities. In spite of the inevitable exhaustion, they are largely successful at integrating dogs into their families.

Usually one family member is the driving force behind the decision to get a dog. The primary dog caregiver is either this person or Mom. Training is much like exercising the dog in terms of its time requirement. The difference is that while exercise is an open-ended task—you need to provide it daily for many years in the case of most dogs—training is a temporary blitz. Once it's done and you're on maintenance, there's very little work. So, if you're the main dog person, consider recruiting other household members to pitch in temporarily on other dog-related daily tasks to free you up for training. Even if your family is less concerned about the dog than you are, the fact that these chores are finite with the promise of a nicely trained dog at the end will often convince people to help out.

Try a More Instantly Gratifying Project

There's a saying in professional dog training: "It's all tricks." What this means is that although we classify sit, down, etc. as *obedience* and rolling over and high-five as *tricks*, the nuts and bolts of training these behaviors do not differ in the slightest. From a dog's perspective, sitting and rolling over are equally arbitrary actions. For this reason, if you're bored with basic obedience, skip ahead to the list of tricks and train one. Your dog will get better at learning, and your technique will get better more painlessly. Then return to the basic obedience behavior that appeals to you the most and have a go at it. Then, when both you and your dog are at your most competent, tackle the tedious stuff.

Expectations

I can't tell you how many times a training student has asked me to come look at their dog in order to diagnose what's going wrong with the training, which, by the student's account, is hopelessly stalled. In most cases it turns out that the training is going swimmingly, at national average speed or better. At first students are dumbfounded to hear that what they're experiencing is what training is supposed to look like. They want a seamless series of pushes to ever-increasing levels of difficulty. Instead, there is to their mind an abnormal amount of sticking and dropping, clear evidence that something is dreadfully wrong. However, very few dogs, even those taught using beautifully gradual plans by expert trainers, make never-ending progress each and every set, each and every session. Don't panic if you have a healthy mix of sticks and drops.

NAUGHTINESS (ON YOUR PART)

The most common reason on this earth for being frustrated by slow progress in dog training is poor technique. You ignore or bend the rules (rules are fine for others, but you know what you're doing!). This is naughty.

Breaking rules because you know what you're doing appears to be part of human nature. Here are the five biggest mistakes of dog training:

1. Stinginess with rewards
2. Premature pushing
3. Not keeping track
4. Skipping steps
5. Refusal to drop

1. Stinginess

Stinginess usually stems from our culture and upbringing. We get the message over and over that rewards spoil dogs, that it is better in some moral or cosmic sense to teach them not to expect a tangible return on their behavior. This is tantamount to believing that items falling down when dropped, in accordance with the laws of gravity, are being corrupted. Can you imagine engineers who ignored gravitation when designing airplanes, or parents operating under the assumption that a baby won't grow and so never purchasing bigger clothing?

When airplanes and living things act in accordance with known principles, it is not a moral issue. Somehow, when it comes to behavior, we want to throw known laws out. A trainer who does not motivate the dog she is trying to train is not creating a morally superior animal. She is incompetent.

2. Premature Pushing

As I've mentioned, in our cyberspeed world, animal training feels slow. One way people try to speed things up is to increase the level of difficulty as soon as the dog gets something right once or twice. Our impatience is compounded by our projecting to the dog a way we humans often learn, by a sudden flash of insight. We can suddenly *get* something, such as the punch line of a joke or the reason our soufflé collapsed. Dogs do not learn this way. Dogs learn obedience the way we learn to dance the salsa or play the trumpet. At your first couple of dance lessons, you sometimes get the sequence of steps right. This in no way exempts you from future error. Most of us will need *repetition* of any given dance step before the instructor can safely add another step. Piling more steps on, in fact, can worsen your fledgling performance of the little you've been shown. This is more analogous to your dog learning *Down*.

Also, you understand that you are in a dance class. Your dog is not only learning the actions you're trying to teach her, she's learning that she's supposed to do anything specific at all!

So, even if it looks to *you* like your dog's "got it," train according to the system. Don't up the difficulty to the next level until she's done five repetitions correctly.

3. Not Keeping Track

It is naughty to train by the seat of your pants, faithful to the rules in principle ("Okay, I'll only push on five…") but without actually *counting*. "Approximately" five can end up being three or five out of the last nine. Sloppy training is always inefficient. Cultivate the keeping-track habit.

4. Skipping Steps

Here is another variation on the "this is too slow, I can't stand it" theme. You jump ahead to the fifth step (you and your dog are prodigies, after all—the gradual progressions are for mere mortals) to save time. You kind of/sort of get away with it the first time. It's rewarding because fast progress is rewarding to humans, as is the sense that you and/or your dog are above average in terms of

the pace of learning, so you do it again. Sooner or later—usually sooner—you get your comeuppance. Your dog's obedience is without strong foundation, a house of cards. It all falls apart and, because you witnessed this meteoric learning curve early on, the only possible explanation in your mind is that now your dog is being willfully disobedient. But it was perfectly predictable from the poor technique that it would go this way. No good animal trainer cuts corners this much.

5. Refusal to Drop

Even experienced animal trainers sometimes hate dropping. Nobody wants to sand, prime, and paint a woodworking project and then have to do it again. And nobody wants to go back and redo steps in dog training exercises. But failure to drop when needed is catastrophic.

Even if you do every single thing right, the dog sometimes just needs review. If you think about it, this isn't surprising. You don't wake up every day feeling exactly the same way you did yesterday. Sometimes you're on top of your game and sometimes you're not. It is overwhelmingly likely that dogs also don't feel exactly the same every day; that they have good days and bad days, good sessions and bad sessions. So if you hate dropping, you're in good company. But if you want results, train as much like a pro as you can by following the rule "two or fewer on five equals drop to the previous exercise."

GETTING A PRO ON BOARD

When I first got into training, the mantra was that an owner *should* train his own dog. Contracting the training out to a professional trainer was viewed as irresponsible, and the trainers who provided such services were viewed as slightly sleazy. That *should* mentality resulted in a lot of dogs ending up untrained and therefore homeless and even dead as a result. In those days, pet class instructors did not set out to become pet dog training specialists. They came from the ranks of competitive obedience, which meant that they trained their own dogs very heavily. Training was their hobby. They were process lovers who had very well-defined, concrete goals, the titles their dogs could earn if they trained enough.

Nowadays, it's completely different. Pet dog training has become a bona fide specialty, with means and goals very different from those of dog-sport enthusiasts. Part of this new specialty is a happy swing toward pragmatism. Well-meaning owners who want to do the right thing—train their dogs—but can't find it in themselves to do it, and hire someone to do it for them, no longer have to feel guilty.

So if in spite of your best intentions this is just not working out, know that there are professional trainers who are competent, ethical, and use force-free training methods. A professional trainer can offer the service of doing training sessions while you are at work—a huge win-win for bored stay-at-home-alone dogs—or will install basics and more while your dog is boarded in the trainer's home or facility.

Impulse-Control Behaviors

Dogs are not known for their natural circumspection. They are descendents of that subset of wolves who scavenged opportunistically around human encampments. And nothing in their life experiences spontaneously teaches them that good things come to those who wait. Dogs who rush through doorways get through doorways more quickly. Dogs who move toward goals get closer to those goals.

In this section are instructions for installing the following behaviors:

- Sit-Stay
- Down-Stay
- Wait
- Leave It
- Walking on Leash

If you work on these behaviors, you'll reap a number of benefits:

- A more polite dog in a variety of situations, high on everybody's priority list.
- A dog with a revised philosophy of how to get what he wants in life: rather than rushing, grabbing, helping himself, and so on, he pauses, refrains, waits for instructions.
- A trainer with razor-sharp timing.

Chapter 5

Sit-Stay and Down-Stay

Sit-Stay and *Down-Stay* share the concept of being rewarded for not moving, but they require the dog to remain in a slightly different position. While training just one behavior can be enough to cover applications in day-to-day life, once one behavior is trained, the other is rendered easier (i.e. larger increments in the training plan). It's so instructive for beginner trainers to see a very specific case of this learning-to-learn effect, that I advocate training both.

SIT-STAY

Sit-Stay means the dog sits and remains sitting—he does not get up out of his *Sit,* does not rotate in place or creep forward—in spite of distractions. It's the single best behavior vehicle I know to improve trainer timing. The trainer must not only cancel rewards pointedly for mistakes, but must identify the moment that the dog makes good on the *Stay* contract—in other words, when he decides not to break his *Stay*—and reward at that moment. It's also instructive for what trainers call *feeding for position* the delivery of the actual reward while the dog is still in position, sitting in this case.

Sit-Stay I

1. Cue your dog to *Sit*, and pay him when he does.
2. Immediately after paying, dangle a treat in your fingers two feet in front of him at nose level. This will cause him to stand up and move toward the treat.

3. As he starts to get up, say "Too bad" and quickly cancel the reward by snatching it abruptly upward.

4. Repeat—he needs to learn that moving scares the treat away.

5. After several repetitions, your dog will stay sitting for just a second when you dangle the treat. Pay immediately, feeding for position (he must collect his reward while still sitting).

Remember how counterintuitive it was in the *Premack Recall* when your dog had to move *away* from something in order to get it? *Stay* is also counterintuitive insofar as the right answer is *don't get up,* even if it looks like a good idea to move. We're going to teach your dog that not moving can be very productive indeed.

Push on five for five.

Sit-Stay II

1. Set up the same way as *Sit-Stay I.*

2. This time, your dog must remain sitting for three seconds while you dangle the treat.

3. At the end of three seconds, pay immediately, feeding for position.

4. If your dog moves out of his *Sit* at any point in the three seconds, snatch the reward away.

Push on five for five.

Sit-Stay III

1. *Sit* your dog and pay the *Sit*.

2. This time, move the treat in your hand to the floor two feet away (if he mistakes this for a *Down* cue, don't worry—just re-*Sit* him and try again slightly farther away).

3. If your dog remains sitting for one second with the food on the floor, pay him, feeding for position.

4. If he breaks out of his *Sit,* instantly cancel the reward and repeat.

Push on five for five.
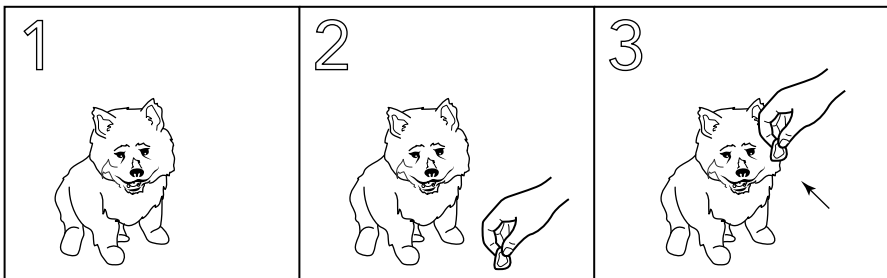
Sit-Stay IV

1. Now try the same thing with the food temptation on the ground for three seconds.

2. Be sure to feed for position.

3. If your dog finds this difficult (fewer than two for five), drop to *Sit-Stay III* or split and try two seconds.

Walk-Around Sit-Stay

1. *Sit* your dog and pay the *Sit*. Take a step to your left and then step right back in front of him (no delay).

2. If he remains sitting still (doesn't get up or rotate with you), pay, feeding for position—then immediately take another step (without re-sitting him).

3. If he breaks his sit or rotates to keep facing you, say "Too bad," pivot back, and start over at Step 1. Head movement is fine.

4. Once your dog has done five in a row without moving, repeat the exercise, this time taking *two* steps before pivoting back to reward your dog.

5. Once he's five for five, try *three* steps—you are working your way around your dog in a circle one step at a time, as though he were the center of a clock.

6. After you reach the halfway point directly behind your dog, and have done it successfully five for five, complete a full circle around him all in one shot.

Once you reach halfway, go all the way around

"So good!"
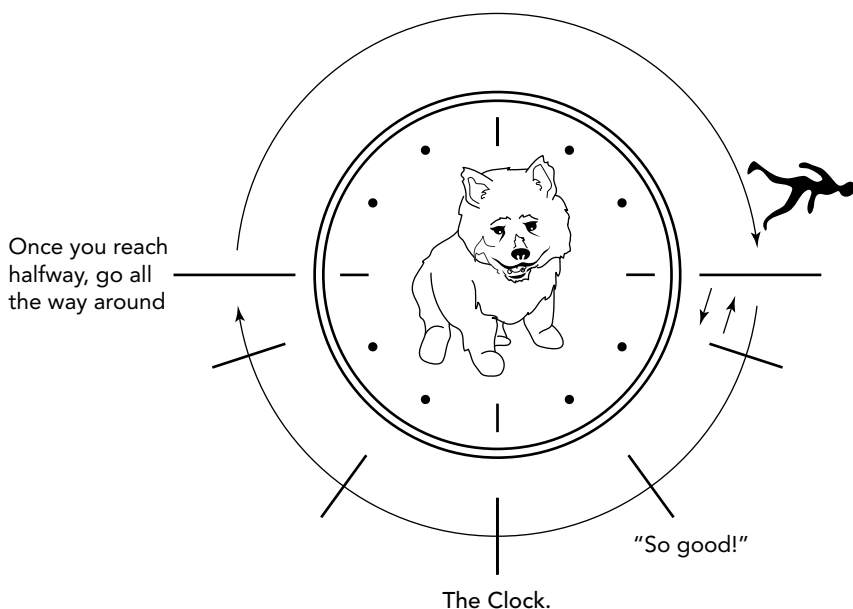
The Clock.

Watch your dog closely and cancel the reward ("Too bad") the instant he breaks.

> **Remember to drop to fewer steps if you are getting zero, one, or two out of five.**

Sit-Stay V

1. Repeat the clock process in the other direction.

2. Get five for five with one step before progressing to two, and so on.

3. Mind your timing—keeping your eyes on the dog will allow quick "Too bads" if he breaks, which will really help him learn.

Sit-Stay VI

> **Now do a full circle in each direction for one reward at the very end.**

> **Reward the trainer—you!—heavily here.**
> **You have nailed a key exercise!**
> **Enter your reward in the 2 boxes below.**

Having completed a Double Walk-Around *Sit-Stay*, a splendid foundation for other impulse control behaviors, and proof that I am on my way to highly skilled training, I win:	Your reward (fill in)

Why Train Distractions First on Stays?

The three parameters in *Stay* are:

- **Distance**—how far away from you
- **Duration**—for how long
- **Distraction**—around what kinds of distractions

I prefer to train distractions first for a few reasons:

1. **Rate or the frequency with which the dog is rewarded**—A brief distraction can be presented, the dog rewarded or told "Too bad," and a new repetition commenced all within a few seconds, allowing for a high rate of reward, critical for beginner animals. Distance, by contrast, is more

time-consuming, and duration will greatly sink your rate of reward even if the dog has uniformly correct responses. For this reason, duration is best trained last, when your dog is at a more intermediate level and so will better tolerate longer dry spells between rewards.

2. **Trainer timing**—By working up close, it is easier to spot the earliest muscle contraction when the dog is about to break the *Stay* and to get the "Too bad" in.

3. **Overlap with other impulse control exercises**—Research has shown that animals pick up new tasks more quickly if they resemble tasks they've learned before. By training *Stay* this way (the *active* way), *Stay* has more in common with and will *feel* more similar to W*ait, Leave It, Walking on Leash*, and even *Premack Recalls.*

4. **Pay now versus Pay later training strategies**—For most people, resisting distractions is the most important part of *Stay,* as well the trickiest. Distractions will have to be addressed sooner or later. By front-loading part of the distraction training (without sacrificing rate of reward), a strong foundation is built.

5. **Free duration priming**—By cranking out trials and sets without breaking off and resitting the dog between each set, the dog gets a bit of preduration training along the way.

Sit-Stay VII

1. *Sit* your dog and then take one step backward. Step back in immediately.

2. If your dog remains sitting, pay, feeding for position.

3. If he breaks his S*tay,* say "Too bad" and try again.

4. When your dog is five for five on one step, try two steps. Keep your eyes on him at all times in case of breaks. Then progress to three steps, four, and so on, up to the maximum distance in the room.

   Remember to add another step only when your dog is five for five.

> ### *Bungee Stays*
>
> Imagine there is a bungee cord attaching you to your dog. As soon as you reach your target distance, snap right back to the dog. This will prevent you from *double dipping* (adding duration to this distance-only exercise).

What Is the "Too Bad" For?

Timing is critically important in dog training. Rewards have to be within one second of the action you are rewarding. And so does feedback about errors. "Too bad" signals to the dog that the action he just did ruined his chances for a reward. This signal, called a *no-reward marker,* is especially valuable in *Stay* exercises. The instant the dog starts to move, you can inform him that that choice blew it for him. He will learn that whenever he hears "Too bad," there will be no reward and the exercise will start over from the beginning.

Sit-Stay VIII

1. Do a short bungee *Stay* (four or five steps away), and when you snap back to your dog, add a walk-around before rewarding him.

2. If he breaks, say "Too bad" right away, re-*Sit* him, and start again.

Sit-Stay IX

1. Do a full-distance *Bungee Stay* with a walk-around.

2. Do a short-distance *Bungee Stay* (four or five steps) with a double walk-around at the end (both directions).

3. Do a full distance *Bungee Stay* with a double walk-around, all for one reward at the end.

Sit-Stay X

1. Warm up your dog with one long-distance *Bungee Stay* with a walk-around at the end.

2. Head back out, but only to half the distance this time—wait there for a count of five seconds, then go back, do a walk-around, and pay, feeding for position.

Reminders

- Train in sets of five.
- Push—go on to the next exercise when your dog is five for five.
- Stick—do another set of five at the current level when your dog is three or four for five.
- Drop—go back to the previous exercise when your dog is two or fewer for five.

3. Keep your eyes on your dog in case he breaks, so you can mark the instant he breaks with "Too bad."

Push on five for five.

Sit-Stay XI

1. Repeat *Stay XI* for

- Ten seconds
- Fifteen seconds
- Twenty seconds
- Thirty seconds
- One minute
- Two minutes

2. As soon as you get up to thirty seconds, things get more complicated. You must start mixing it up. Between the long *Stays*, throw in some one- to ten-second stays so that your dog doesn't learn that every single *Stay* is a long one. This means your set, rather than being five repetitions of thirty seconds in a row, will look something like this:

Duration	Got It or Didn't (mark ✓ for got it, X for didn't)	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Thirty seconds	✓	
Four seconds	X	
Six seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	✓	
Two seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	X	
Thirty seconds	✓	
Nine seconds	✓	
Three seconds	✓	
Two seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	✓	
How many thirty-second *Sit-Stays* done?	Four for five	Stick

The dog got a four for five on the target duration, the thirty seconds, which indicates a stick: another round like this for the next set. The short stays in between don't count. It might seem like these extra stays are adding a lot more work, but they are over quickly, and so are cheap for both you and your dog.

Notice the absence of a pattern. If you always did short-short-long, your dog would learn that sequence and possibly break on every third trial, on the long one. Dogs are very, very good at noticing these kinds of continuity things.

3. Drops and splits are common in duration stays. If your dog is two or fewer for five, drop back to the previous duration or split to a duration between the one he's good at and the target. For instance, if you're having difficulty getting from thirty seconds to one minute, throw in a set of forty-five-second *Sit-Stays*.

The hallmark of a good trainer is an easy willingness to drop and split.

Push on five for five.

Sit-Stay XII

1. You've been working duration at half distance. Now practice *Sit-Stays* at the greatest distance you can in the room at following durations, splitting as needed:

   • Fifteen seconds

   • Thirty seconds

   • Two minutes

2. Throw one- to ten-second *Stays* randomly between the long ones.

Push on five for five.

Why Are the Increments Larger Now?

Notice that in *Stay XII*, the increases in duration are steeper than in *Stay XI*, even though the former is at a greater distance. There are two reasons for this. One is that even though you've upped the distance, it is your second rung up the duration ladder. The other reason is that your dog is now transitioning to being an intermediate learner and so is increasingly tolerant of dry spells between rewards. Just like kids who get enthusiastic about *Hooked on Phonics*, your dog is getting hooked on this interesting puzzle we call *obedience*.

Sit-Stay XIII

1. Practice long-distance *Stays* for one and two minutes (with random one- to ten-second *Stays* in between) in a new room in the house.
2. Keep your eyes on the dog. As the duration grows, the trainer's mind can wander, which will wreak havoc with timing.
3. If your dog falls apart (three or more breaks in a row) when you switch locations, stay in the same room but warm him up with sets of shorter durations.

   Push on five for five.

Sit-Stay XIV

1. Practice one-minute medium-distance *Stays* with added distractions. Be ready with your quick "Too bad" when your dog breaks, which he will likely do the first few times. Between the one-minute *Stays,* throw in the short ones randomly, as you did before. Try these distractions:
   • Bounce a tennis ball.
   • Roll a tennis ball.
   • Squeak a new squeaky toy that your dog has never seen.
   • Sit in a chair.
   • Sit in a chair and eat a snack.
   • Lie on the floor.
   • Do jumping jacks.
2. Long distance, one minute, same distractions.
3. Long distance, two minutes, new distractions. Your dog may handle this double dipping (increase of both duration and distraction parameters). If not, split.

   If you use a fabulously interesting toy as a distraction, whenever your dog gets five for five, along with your praise and food payment let him have the toy (deliver it to him in position) and break off for a play period. This degree of impulse control is not easy and so deserves a celebratory game afterward.

   When you can no longer stump your dog in the house, it's time to move on to Part III. You can also continue to add duration (in increments of thirty seconds) in the house.

DOWN-STAY

Notice that the *Down-Stay* sequence is identical to *Sit-Stay* except that it's faster—some exercises are skipped. Because your dog has already been through one entire *Stay* regime (sit), the similar task of *Down-Stay* will progress more quickly. Your dog is learning how to learn. The process will also be sped up by your sharper training skills.

Down-Stay I

1. Warm up your *Down* by rewarding five downs (no *Stay* yet) for response to a verbal cue or small hand signal.
2. Ask for a *Down*, praise when he does, and then do the treat-dangle exercise as you did for *Sit-Stay*, this time dangling the treat a little lower.
3. If your dog sits, stands up, or crawls forward, abruptly cancel the treat, as you did for *Sit*, and try again.
4. Repeat—he needs to learn that moving scares the treat away.
5. If he holds his *Down-Stay*, count to two seconds, and then praise and feed for position (he must consume his reward in lying down).

   Push on five for five.

Down-Stay II

1. Ask your dog to lie down, then put the treat on the floor about a foot in front of him, being ready to cover or snatch it up if he even flinches toward it (some people prefer stepping on it). Make sure he doesn't break and get the treat.
2. If he breaks (even shuffles forward), say "Too bad" and cancel (snatch or cover) the reward.
3. If he stays down for two seconds, pick up the treat and give it to him, feeding for position.

   Push on five for five.

Down-Stay III (Walk-Around Stay I; see diagram on page 65)—The Clock

Walk-around Stay

1. Cue your dog to lie down (verbal or hand signal—trainer's choice) and praise when he does.
2. Walk a quarter circle around him—about three steps—to one side, keeping your eyes on him, immediately returning to your starting position in front.
3. If he breaks or rotates with you, say "Too bad" and start again. Head movement is fine.
4. If your dog holds his *Stay*, reward him in position, then immediately do another one.
5. If you need to, split to single-step increments, as you did in *Sit-Stay*.

   Push on five for five.

Down-Stay IV (Walk-Around Stay II; see diagram on page 65)

1. Cue your dog to lie down and praise when he does.
2. Do a full walk-around *Stay*, keeping your eyes on him to ensure perfect timing of "too bad" if he breaks.
3. Praise and reward when you finish the circle, remembering to feed for position.

   Push on five for five.

Down-Stay V

1. Cue your dog to lie down and praise when he does.
2. Do a one-quarter circle in the other direction from *Down-Stay IV*, keeping your eyes on your dog.
3. As usual, say "Too bad" if he breaks and reward if he stays, feeding for position.

   Push on five for five.
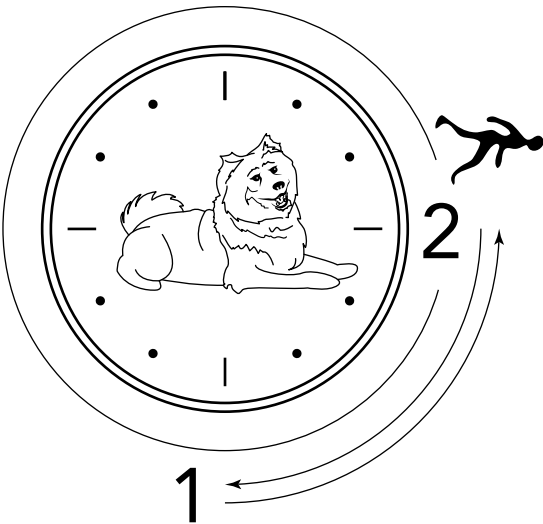
Down-Stay III and IV: Once he's five for five for a quarter circle, go all the way around.

What are the next two logical exercises, *VI* and *VII?*

Down-Stay VI	
Down-Stay VII	

Answer:

VI—Full walk-around in the opposite direction of *Down-Stay V*.

VII—Double walk-around: walk once around in each direction for a total of two circles for one reward.

If you got the answer correct, you are starting to think like a trainer!

Down-Stay VIII—Distance

1. Practice *Bungee Stays* at increasing distances, backing away so you can keep your eyes on your dog for timing purposes, and returning immediately (no duration) to reward him once you reach the target distance.

2. Add a walk-around at the end.

3. Use the following increments, always pushing on five for five, feeding
for position, and keeping your eyes on the dog to say "Too bad" the
instant he breaks.

   a. One step

   b. Five steps

   c. Full distance in room

Down-Stay IX—Duration

At full distance in the room you're in, build duration as follows:

- Ten seconds
- Thirty seconds
- One minute
- Two minutes

The reason you can shoot so quickly up to long durations in *Down-Stay* is
that you have already built a *Sit-Stay*, which is a very similar exercise. If you do
a *Down-Stay* before completing *Sit-Stay*, your *Down-Stay* increments must be
smaller. Those listed above are too steep for a dog learning *Stay* for the first
time. Use the *Sit-Stay* increments or else go back and do the *Sit-Stay*. Once you
reach thirty seconds, begin inserting short-duration stays between the official
thirty seconds in your set.

A set will look something like this:

Duration	Got It or Didn't (mark ✓ for got it, X for didn't)	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Thirty seconds	✓	
Four seconds	X	
Six seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	✓	
Two seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	X	
Nine seconds	✓	
Three seconds	✓	

Duration	Got It or Didn't (mark ✓ for got it, X for didn't)	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Two seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	✓	
How many thirties done?	Four for five	Stick—another round of thirty seconds

An entire training session might look like this:

Duration	Got It or Didn't (mark ✓ for got it, X for didn't)	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Eight seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	X	
Fifteen seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	✓	
Twelve seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	X	
Five seconds	✓	
Twenty-two seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	X	
Nine seconds	✓	
How many sixties done?	Two for five	Drop to thirty seconds

Duration	Got It or Didn't (mark ✓ for got it, X for didn't)	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Sixteen seconds	✓	
Three seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	✓	
Twelve seconds	✓	

(continued)

Duration	Got It or Didn't (mark ✓ for got it, X for didn't)	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Ten seconds	X	
Thirty seconds	✓	
Twenty seconds	✓	
Nine seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	✓	
Thirty seconds	✓	
How many thirties done?	Five for five	Push to 60 seconds

Duration	Got It or Didn't (mark ✓ for got it, X for didn't)	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Fifteen seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	✓	
Thirty-five seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	✓	
Thirteen seconds	X	
Twenty-two seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	✓	
Ten seconds	✓	
Sixty seconds	✓	
Twenty-four seconds	✓	
How many sixties done?	Five for five	Push to two minutes

Duration	Got It or Didn't (mark ✓ for got it, X for didn't)	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Two minutes	X	
Forty-five seconds	✓	
Six seconds	✓	

Duration	Got It or Didn't (mark ✓ for got it, X for didn't)	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Two minutes		
Eighteen seconds		
Two minutes		
Two minutes		
Thirty-two seconds		
Four seconds		
Twenty-five seconds		
Two minutes		
How many thirties done?	Three for five	Stick—another round of two minutes

Working duration in *Stays* is, by definition, time-consuming. If you persevere, however, you will have built a glorious foundation with many practical applications. This would be a good time to reward yourself.

1. Practice one-minute long-distance *Stays* with these distractions:

- Bounce a tennis ball.
- Roll the tennis ball.
- Squeak a new squeaky toy that your dog has never seen (reward him with it at the end).
- Sit in a chair.
- Sit in a chair and eat a snack.
- Lie on the floor.
- Do jumping jacks.

2. Practice two-minute long-distance *Stays* with similar distractions.

> ## *Reminders*
>
> - Throw in random short-duration Stays once you get to thirty seconds.
> - Keep your eyes on the dog for well-timed "Too bad" reward cancellations.
> - Feed for position—the dog collects his reward at the end in a down.
> - Stay faithful to the Push-Drop-Stick rules—you can't fail if you do.

When you can no longer stump your dog in the house, it's time to move on to Part III. You can also continue to add duration (in increments of thirty seconds) in the house.

Help! I Keep Having to Drop! Is He Dumb?

It is not the slightest bit unusual to have many Drops and Sticks. It has no bearing on your dog's intelligence or personality. For example, consider the following fictitious dog's perfectly normal sequence of *Down-Stay* sets:

> Sixty seconds—zero for five—Drop
> Thirty seconds—two for five—Drop
> Fifteen seconds—one for five—Drop
> Five seconds—four for five—Stick
> Five seconds—five for five—Push
> Ten seconds—five for five—Push
> Fifteen seconds—five for five—Push
> Quit for the day—phew!
> (Start at ten seconds tomorrow)

When you were in school, you may have been terrific at English, so-so at biology, and terrible at geography. Your dog is no different—she will have different aptitudes for different behaviors. The advantage in dog training is that the pace of learning can be tailored to the individual. This means, if you work Push-Drop-Stick correctly, your dog will end up mastering every subject. So don't worry about how long it takes—the pros never do—just work the system.

Chapter 6

Wait and Leave It

The *Wait* and *Leave It* behaviors continue our theme of instilling in your dog a policy of not acting on first impulse to go through doorways or in and out of cars, or to immediately eat any remotely edible substance she encounters.

WAIT

Most dogs rush to get outside, which makes for mayhem when you exit for walks, open car doors, or let them out into the yard. The terminal behavior (final goal) for the following set of exercises is polite waiting when any door is opened. Your dog will be permitted to go through only when you invite her to do so.

Wait I

1. At your normal walk time, put your dog on leash and station yourself at the closed front door.
2. Keep the leash loose so your dog can make her errors.
3. Put your hand on the latch and open the door a couple of inches.
4. As soon as your dog tries to get out the door, close it abruptly (be careful not to jam paws or nose).
5. Wait until your dog simmers down and repeat.
6. Open the door and let her out ("Okay, let's go—so good") when she pauses for two seconds on the two-inch opening.
7. Let her sniff for a few seconds, then go back in for the next repetition.

   Being allowed through the door is the reward—grant it when your dog waits politely. Do *Wait II* right away when she's five for five— don't take the actual walk until you complete *Wait II.*

Wait II

1. Station yourself at the closed front door as in *Wait I*.
2. Keep the leash loose.
3. This time, open the door one foot, which will likely tempt your dog to try bolting out again.
4. As soon as she flinches toward the door, close it. If she manages to get out, collect her back in and try again.
5. Don't let her through the door until she waits two seconds with the door open about one foot.

   When she's five for five, go on the walk.

Wait III

1. At the next walk time, warm up your dog with one repetition of *Wait II*. Remember your loose leash.
2. Now open the door all the way, being ready to close it if she lunges.
3. Try to stop her charge by closing the door (better timing of consequence this way) or moving across the gap with your body, but if she's too fast for you, escort her back in on leash.
4. When your dog waits two seconds with the door fully open, praise her and go through.

   When she's five for five, go on the walk. Build one second at a time up to five seconds.

Should I Always Go through the Door First?

When I first started training in the 1970s, I was solemnly told that dogs went through doorways ahead of people in an attempt to dominate us. This model of dogs obsessing about status has long been debunked (though status is something that concerns humans a great deal, and we project this concern onto dogs). Dogs move faster than people, and they are very excited about going places, so they rush out doors. It is not at all inherently obvious to them that there is anything wrong with this, any more than it would occur to you that there was anything wrong with your natural walking speed, or that it is an attempt to dominate anybody.

Wait IV

1. Station yourself at the closed door.
2. Say "Wait" before you put your hand on the latch.
3. Do the exercise as usual.

When she's five for five, go on the walk.

Wait V

1. Repeat *Wait II–IV* using the door to the yard, if you have one.
2. You'll have to be quick so your dog doesn't beat you and end up rewarded for rushing.
3. If she keeps beating you, split to an on-leash set.

Wait VI

1. Take your dog for a car ride to a fun place, like the park—keep her seat belt or leash on during the trip.
2. When you arrive at the destination, leave her in the car, and station yourself outside her exit door.
3. Open the door just enough to get your hand on the leash—then open wider.
4. If your dog rushes, block her with your body (don't risk a car-door close) or escort her back into the car on leash. Let her out when she waits two seconds. Give her a few seconds of sniff time, and then repeat.

When she's five for five, give her the visit, a walk, or her usual off-leash time at the park.

Quiz!

From what you know about dog training so far, where in the sequence should you add the verbal cue "Wait" to your car-exit exercise?

a. As soon as my dog tries to rush through
b. As I open the door wider
c. Before I open the door wider

Answer: C

Wait VII

1. Prepare your dog's dinner and stand with the bowl in your hand.
2. Ask her to sit. As soon as she does, praise her, say "Wait," and then start slowly lowering the bowl.
3. As soon as she breaks her sit, quickly lift the bowl back up again.
4. Put the bowl all the way down and release her ("Okay, chow down") when she has held her sit for two seconds with the bowl on the floor (keep your hand on for quick removals when she breaks).

   Practice this exercise at every meal until your dog gets it right the first try—once she's released to eat, the exercise is over for that meal (don't take the bowl back to do more reps).

LEAVE IT

Dogs are classified as *opportunistic scavengers*, which means that they are pre-programmed to grab and eat almost anything vaguely edible that they encounter. The terminal *Leave It* is for your dog to refrain from touching food or other items when you say "Leave it."

Leave It I

1. With your dog at liberty (not on a *Stay*), sit on the floor and place a treat in front of you. Be ready to cover it with your hand (don't let her "rob" one).
2. As soon as your dog notices and goes for the treat, quickly cover it with your hand.
3. Keep your hand on the treat until your dog gives up trying to get it.
4. As soon as she stops trying, praise her ("So good"), pick up the treat, and give it to her from your hand. Then do another repetition.

   Push when your dog has done five in a row with very little worrying.

Leave It II

1. As you go to place the treat on the ground, be ready to abort the mission and pull it up if your dog goes for it. The rule now is that she mustn't go for it at all, even as you're putting it down.

2. If she refrains as you place it on the floor and waits one second, praise, pick up the treat, and give it to her.

Push on five for five.

Leave It III

1. Now make your dog wait two seconds before picking up the treat and giving it to her

2. Once she's five for five, try for three seconds.

3. Never let her take the treat off the floor—always reward her from your hand.

Push on five for five.

> ## *What if She Sits or Lies Down?*
>
> It is fine if your dog sits or lies down during this exercise. Some dogs will lift their heads and just stand there, some will take a step or two back, and some will offer a *Sit* or a *Down*. It's all good, as long as she stops trying to get the treat.

Leave It IV

1. Now stand up and place a treat on the floor right in front of your foot. Be ready to put your foot on it if your dog tries to get it.

2. If she tries for it, put your foot on it and wait until she stops trying, then remove your foot again, always ready to cover as needed.

3. As soon as she stops trying to get at the treat, praise her ("So good"), pick up the treat, and give it to her.

Push on five for five.

Leave It V

1. Practice in another room and with another kind of treat.

2. When your dog's five for five, make her leave it for three seconds, then five.

Push on five for five.

Leave It VI

1. Sequester your dog in another room so you can plant treats without her seeing you do it.

2. Put five treats in different places, to practice *coming upon* something with your dog.

3. Get your dog, put her on leash for insurance, and casually go walking toward the first treat. You are now going to introduce the verbal cue.

4. As soon as your dog notices the goodies, say "Leave it" and get ready to stand on it (use your leash as a last resort only—it's better to make the treat disappear if she guns for it, as this will better translate into off-leash control).

5. If your dog goes for it, say "Too bad" and stand on it—withdraw a few paces and try another approach.

6. If she leaves it for two seconds, praise her ("So good"), pick up the treat, and give it to her—then proceed to the next one, keeping track of how many of five she gets right the first time.

   Push to Part II when your dog gets five in a row right the first time on a new day.

Chapter 7

Walking on Leash

Walking nicely on leash is not the same thing as *heeling*. Heeling is much more precise and demanding, and—while an interesting behavior to train—is rarely employed by pet owners on walks. The point of the walk, in fact, is to give the dog an opportunity to check out smells, a great pleasure for dogs, and this is impossible if he's heeling. So walking on leash is a compromise both the owner and dog can live with. It allows the dog some freedom but not so much that he is all over the place (meaning *switching sides*) or pulling, which makes the walk unpleasant for the owner.

WALKING ON LEASH EXERCISES

Walking on Leash I

1. If you have a toy-crazy dog, use a toy for this exercise. If he's toy-*interested*, buy a new toy and don't let him see it until you do the exercise. If he's quite unmotivated by toys, use a pile of tasty treats. Dinner is also fine if he's keen for it.
2. In a quiet room in your house, put your dog on leash (I like a four-foot leash, but six is fine) and tie him to something so he can see what you're doing.
3. Show him the toy or handful of treats, then walk about ten feet away and put it on the floor.
4. Go back to your dog, take the leash, and start walking verrrrry slowly toward the prize. Hold the end of the leash against your body to keep the length from changing due to arm movements.
5. Your dog will pull the leash tight toward the prize. This makes you start over. Say "Too bad" and return to the starting position.
6. Wait until he gives up straining, and then start slowly walking again. He'll pull again. Say "Too bad."

7. Repeat until your dog can make it all the way to the prize without tightening the leash at all, then do a two-second *Leave It* and pick up the toy or treat and let him have it (don't let him grab it from the ground).

Push on five in a row without one tightening. This exercise will take many repetitions for most dogs. This is one of those character-building parts of training that I mentioned earlier, so make sure you're in the right frame of mind to plod away at it.

| Loose leash – "so good!" – keep moving toward the prize | Tight leash – "too bad!" – start all over again |

Walking on Leash II

1. Repeat *Walking on Leash I* with a brand-new prize.

2. Be superstrict: if in doubt about whether your dog has tightened the leash, start over—he'll actually learn faster if the standard is tough. I have often told my students to be "thought police"—to say "Too bad" and start over if the dog is even thinking about tightening the leash.

Push on five in a row without one tightening.

Walking on Leash III

1. Repeat *Walking on Leash I* with yet another new prize *and* in a different room.

2. In spite of these changes, you might see your dog catch on faster—after just two or three mistakes, he might start consistently doing this right. Keep track of how many tries it takes before he succeeds at five in a row.

Exercise	Total number of tries before he does five in a row perfectly
III: New prize in a new room	

> **Practice until your dog does five in a row correctly without any warm-up errors (in other words, until you can put a zero in the box above).**

WALKING ON LEASH OUTDOORS

Training your dog to walk on leash outdoors without pulling is much more difficult than the indoor exercises for one reason: outdoors, you don't have *control* of the rewards. Whereas indoors you can instantly stop and start progress toward the reward to make your point, outdoors there are sights and smells in all directions, which your dog can "collect" for naughty behavior. For this reason, I'm a fan of employing equipment to give you relief from pulling outside, to supplement the foundation exercises you've just done.

Historically, dog trainers have gravitated toward pain to teach dogs not to pull. An array of special collars that choke, shock, and dig into the dog's neck exist, and their principal market is exasperated dog owners with pulling dogs. Although I used to use such collars, I no longer do because I am not comfortable with hurting dogs and because evidence has mounted that these collars are dangerous, even if used as directed.

Luckily, as dog training has gained in sophistication in the last two decades, much gentler anti-pull equipment has emerged. The two main categories of humane antipulling gear are:

- Halters that the dog wears on his head, like a horse
- Body harnesses that attach at the front of the dog's chest

Each type comes in a variety of brand names, many of which are available at pet supply stores. Here are the advantages and disadvantages of each type.

	Head Halter	Body Harness
Degree of control	Significant reduction in pulling in most dogs, plus control of the head	Moderate reduction in pulling in most dogs
Fitting	Requires a careful initial fitting for all dogs	Requires a careful initial fitting for all dogs
Dog acceptance	Most dogs require a get-used-to period. Some dogs hate it.	Most dogs are fine with it right away.
Owner acceptance	To an untrained eye, looks like a muzzle. Get-used-to period makes some owners give up.	Most owners like the look.

There is some variation among brands. Browse online to see what each product looks like on a dog. Then read the specs table above and go to a supply store to see the products in person. Try some on, if they'll let you. Purchase the one you like best and give it a whirl. If you don't love it, exchange it.

Both head halters and body harnesses can be ornery to fit the first time, but luckily, you only have to adjust the buckles to your dog once. If you take a training class or get a private lesson or two, the trainer should be able to help you fit the device. Fit matters to get the full antipull effect.

Never leave a head halter on a dog when he's not on a walk. Also, neither device is a substitute for a flat collar, which your dog should wear all the time so he's never without ID tags.

PART THREE

Maintaining and Improving

In this section are instructions for taking the behaviors you've trained to the next level: teaching the dog to discriminate verbal cues—which is fascinating but fiendishly difficult—getting key behaviors reliable in different contexts—which is more difficult for dogs than most people think—and making sure you don't lose what you've achieved, meaning *maintaining* the training.

- Mixing It Up
  - Position Discrimination
  - Shopping for Verbals
- Taking It on the Road
  - Transferring Training (New Trainers?)
  - Training in New Locations
  - Training with Distractions
- Consolidation
- Maintenance of Training

If you complete this section, you'll reap a number of benefits:

- You will get your most profound firsthand glimpse into two idiosyncrasies about how dogs learn:
  1) Even a fairly well-trained, motivated dog is guessing about what the correct behavior is. Verbal discrimination training will bring this home.
  2) Dogs do not generalize very well. If you change something—a new location, or a new person issuing cues, for instance—it can wreak havoc with trained behaviors.
- You will have quality control and more for less: robust behavior with fewer rewards.

Chapter 8

Mixing It Up

Up until now, you've perfected your positions—*Sit* and *Down*—separately, which is the most efficient installation strategy. There is now another piece you can add: teaching your dog to tell the verbal commands apart, which is called *verbal cue discrimination* in the training biz. However patently obvious it is to you that "sit" means *Sit* and "down" means *Down*, once you start mixing it up rather than practicing the same sequential order of behaviors, most dogs will be guessing!

> **If perfect verbal discrimination between *Sit, Down and Stand* doesn't matter to you, go ahead and skip to Chapter 9, "Taking it on the Road," on page 93.**

POSITION DISCRIMINATION

Below is a series of position changes. A *Sit from a Down* is a change, as is a *Down from a Stand.* From now on, there's no longer any plain old *Sit* or plain old *Down.* Each now has a setup position. So there are four possible changes now:

1. Sit from a Stand

2. Sit from a Down

3. Down from a Sit

4. Down from a Stand

Are You Telling Me That After All That Training She's Guessing?!

Yes! Although a small percentage of dogs will, on the first discrimination exercise, get all or most changes correct on the initial verbal signal (there is a famous dog in Germany, for instance, who is a verbal-discrimination Einstein), the vast majority of dogs will be guessing, especially on all changes that start from a standing setup.

It's as though the verbal cue were just *blah-blah* to the dog, who then thinks, "Okay, I'm supposed to either sit or lie down here so, let's see, how about this one…" and lies down, regardless of the fact that the *content* of your *blah-blah* held the information the dog needed to guess correctly. We humans are strongly predisposed to attend to details of verbal utterances, and it is difficult for us to imagine that dogs, who are so like us in their emotions, are simply not much about language. Dogs can learn over time that certain words predict important events like "walkies" and "wanna go out?" But in word discrimination tasks, like position changes, where your dog would dearly love to get it right ASAP and get paid, you get a glimpse at how genuinely hard it is for her. Before learning to focus on the content of verbal cues, most dogs make guesses based on one or more of the following factors:

1. **Latest trick syndrome**—What have I had a lot of pay for lately? If out of the last eighty times your dog has been paid, fifty-four were for down from a stand, the dog may guess and lie down from a stand—kind of "When in doubt, go with what she seems to want lately." This is why when you teach a new trick to a dog, and so have recently practiced it a lot, the dog trots out that behavior regardless of what cue you give her.
2. **Usual order of events**—Dogs are very good at discerning patterns. If you practice the same sequence of *Sit, Down, Sit, Stand, Down, Sit*, the dog will learn that order and eventually go through the lot of them after the first cue. This is why you'll often see a dog run through her entire repertoire on one command. Someone says "Sit" and the dog sits, then gives a paw, barks, and plays dead. This is also why I make the order as random as I can in the practice sequence table.
3. **Preferred behaviors**—For reasons that are as individual as the bodies and personalities of dogs, some dogs just like sitting more than lying down or vice versa, and this can bias them in discrimination tasks.

Position Discrimination I

1. Practice your dog's changes in the order given in the chart below. For each change give the verbal cue, wait a full second or two, and then give the hand signal.

2. For this first round we will pay for correct response on either the verbal *or* the hand signal—in other words, even if your dog does nothing on the verbal or does the wrong position, you praise and pay after helping her out with the hand signal, always feeding for position, which is especially important now.

3. Because we didn't teach *Stand*—almost nobody uses this command in pet dog training—where you see reset to a stand, simply move around to get your dog standing to set her up for the next change.

Position Discrimination I			
Change	**Got It on Verbal (Circle the V) or Needed Hand Signal? (Circle the HS)**	**Change**	**Got It on Verbal (Circle the V) or Needed a Hand Signal? (Circle the HS)**
Down from Stand	(V) HS	Sit from Stand	V HS
Sit from Down	V (HS)	Down from Sit	V HS
Down from Sit	(V) HS	Sit from Down	V HS
Re-set	*Prompt dog to stand*	Down from Sit	V HS
Sit from Stand	(V) HS	*Re-set*	*Prompt dog to stand*
Down from Sit	(V) HS	Down from Stand	V HS
Sit from Down	V (HS)	Sit from Down	V HS
Re-set	*Prompt dog to stand*	*Re-set*	V HS
Down from Stand	V HS	Sit from Stand	V HS
Sit from Down	V HS	*Re-set*	*Prompt dog to stand*

Position Discrimination I *(continued)*			
Change	Got It on Verbal (Circle the V) or Needed Hand Signal? (Circle the HS)	Change	Got It on Verbal (Circle the V) or Needed a Hand Signal? (Circle the HS)
Re-set	*Prompt dog to stand*	Sit from Stand	V HS
Sit from Stand	V HS	Down from Sit	V HS
Re-set	*Prompt dog to stand*	*Re-set*	*Prompt dog to stand*
Down from Stand	V HS	Down from Stand	V HS
Re-set	*Prompt dog to stand*	Reward trainer—this is not easy	

Push when your dog can run through the entire sequence in the table with no errors. Remember, for now performance on either the verbal or hand signal is okay.

Position Discrimination II

1. Practice the sequence in the above table once again.
2. Give the verbal cue and wait a few seconds.
3. If your dog performs the correct change, praise and reward.
4. If she performs the wrong change or does nothing, say "Too bad,' and then turn around and walk away a few steps before trying again.
5. Keep careful track of how many she's getting correct on the verbal:

Position Discrimination II			
Change	Correct on Verbal? (Mark ✓ for Yes, X for No)	Change	Correct on Verbal? (Mark ✓ for Yes, X for No)
Down from Stand	✓	Sit from Stand	
Sit from Down	X	Down from Sit	

Change	Correct on Verbal? (Mark ✓ for Yes, X for No)	Change	Correct on Verbal? (Mark ✓ for Yes, X for No)
Down from Sit	✓	Sit from Down	
Re-set	Prompt dog to stand	Down from Sit	
Sit from Stand	✓	Re-set	Prompt dog to stand
Down from Sit	✓	Down from Stand	
Sit from Down	X	Sit from Down	
Re-set	Prompt dog to stand	Re-set	
Down from Stand		Sit from Stand	
Sit from Down		Re-set	Prompt dog to stand
Re-set	Prompt dog to stand	Sit from Stand	
Sit from Stand		Down from Sit	
Re-set	Prompt dog to stand	Re-set	Prompt dog to stand
Down from Stand		Down from Stand	
Re-set	Prompt dog to stand	Reward trainer—this is not easy	

Position Discrimination III: Troubleshooting Weaknesses

1. Take a look at how your dog did on the two discrimination exercises you just did to identify any weak changes. (For example, the fictitious dog with the partial records above seems to be weak at *Sit from a Down*.)

2. Write down your dog's weak changes, if any.

3. Try a set of this change only for a verbal command.

4. If she gets a two or fewer on five practicing this change on her own, drop back to a very small hand signal given two seconds after your verbal. Here is an example, using *Sit from a Down*:

Change	Correct on Verbal? (Mark ✓ for Yes, X for No)
Sit from Down	X
Sit from Down	X
Sit from Down	X
Sit from Down	✓
Sit from Down	X
Total correct	One for five—Drop

Then the Drop set:

Change	Correct on Tiny HS? (Mark ✓ for Yes, X for No)
Sit from Down	✓
Sit from Down	✓
Sit from Down	X
Sit from Down	✓
Sit from Down	✓
Total correct	Four for five—Stick

Now do your Stick set, but this time, keep track of how many your dog does correctly on the small hand signal *and also* how many times she jumps the prompt and sits early on the verbal cue during that two-second interval. This means you are still paying *Sits* that require the hand signal but keeping track of how many your dog *would have* gotten, had the requirement been for her to sit on the verbal. It might look something like this:

Change	Correct on Small HS?	Dog Sat on Verbal? (Mark ✓ for Yes, X for No)
Sit from Down	✓	X
Sit from Down	✓	X

Change	Correct on Small HS?	Dog Sat on Verbal? (Mark ✓ for Yes, X for No)
Sit from Down	✓	X
Sit from Down	✓	X
Sit from Down	✓	✓
Total correct	Five for five—Push	One for five—one more HS Stick set

Shopping

As you can see, the dog above is five for five on the small hand signal, which technically means Push. But only once did the dog jump the hand signal (sit *before* the hand signal is given) and sit on the verbal cue. If the trainer Pushes to verbal, it's very likely the next set will be a one or maybe two out of five: too hard. *Shopping* is the term I use for keeping track of what the dog would have gotten on a future criteria step. You are officially rewarding a *Sit from a Down* for small hand signals but *shopping* for verbals, which is your planned *next* step. It is not always possible to shop, as some exercises do not allow for above-and-beyond performance. But an exercise such as performance for a verbal cue followed by a hand signal allows you to see how many she would have had for the verbal alone. Think of it as a crystal ball peek at whether your next Push is likely to work or not.

So, what does a good trainer do with the above? The dog is nailing the small hand signal but it seems premature to require a performance for verbal (you'll end up dropping again). A good trainer would now split, do a set that is between the difficulty of these two. The most obvious split option is an even tinier hand signal. Go ahead and try that for your problem change, shopping for how many the dog gets on the verbal alone.

Another is to extend the time between your verbal cue and the hand signal, to give the dog a longer pause before you say "Too bad" and walk off. This pause is called a *latency hold* or *limited hold* and is abbreviated LH.

Yet another split is to alternate within the set between verbal cues that are followed by small hand signals and verbal cues that are not. The example immediately following extends the latency hold to five seconds and alternates between these hand signal trials and verbal-only trials. Here is an example of how your dog might score on this kind of split set:

Your Problem Change	Did She Get It? (Mark ✓ for Correct, X for Incorrect)	Did She Jump Signal? (Mark ✓ for Yes, X for No)
Verbal followed by small HS	✓	X
Verbal alone with five-second LH	X	
Verbal followed by small HS	✓	✓
Verbal alone with five-second LH	✓	
Verbal followed by small HS	✓	X
Verbal alone with five-second LH	X	
Verbal followed by small HS	✓	✓
Verbal alone with five-second LH	✓	
Verbal followed by small HS	✓	✓
Verbal alone with five-second LH	✓	
Total correct for small HS	Five for five	
Total correct for verbal only	Three for five	
Jumped signal on HS version	Three for five	

The performance above warrants a Push to verbal only, as the dog got five for five on the easier of the two criteria (the hand signal version) and three for five on the more difficult version. Plus, the dog jumped the signal on the hand signal trials three times. If this had been a verbal-only set, the dog would have had a three for five minimum, which is in the Stick range.

Keeping All Your Balls in the Air

Once you've got your problem changes up and running for verbal cues, it's time to reinsert them into the long random series of all four changes. An interesting thing may happen. Your dog may now do the problem changes really well but now be weaker on the changes that used to be strong! This is because you've been blitzing certain changes, which impacts the overall performance. It can make teaching discrimination tasks feel like a plate-spinning or juggling act. As soon as you tighten up one thing, another thing gets wobbly. This is *latest trick syndrome* rearing its head and is inherent to teaching this kind of task to your dog. Don't worry. You'll have all your balls in the air with a bit more practice.

FUN DISCRIMINATION EXERCISES

Trainer Position

If you want a fun glimpse into the mind of your dog, train in a different posture than you have up until now. If you've been standing up, sit in a chair and do some verbal discrimination. The new position you're in will more than likely throw your dog completely off. Don't despair. First, marvel: you read the word "sit" regardless of whether the speaker is sitting, standing, or in the middle of a cartwheel. You instantly grasp that the relevant feature of the entire package is the *word,* and not the *position* the person saying the word is in. Your dog, on the other hand, has incorporated the picture that comes with the verbal command as part of the relevant package elements. If you change this picture, it's as though the word isn't quite as it was before. It's kind of like me saying "Sid" to you instead of "Sit," and you think, "Hmm, that's a bit familiar and I think it could be 'sit' she means but it's not perfectly clear…" For this same reason we will be spending time on adding new trainers and training in new locations in a little while. Dogs are fascinating creatures indeed.

The second thing to do instead of getting depressed is to do some quick review of slightly earlier steps in the process. Do a set with nice big broad hand signals and lots of praise and rewards. Then one set with smaller hand signals. Then add your verbal cues back. The important thing to notice is that although the dog didn't instantly read your verbal cues when you changed your posture, it took only a few review sets, rather than a full retrain from scratch, to get her back up to speed.

Lying on the Floor

Once you've got your dog responding to verbal *Sits* and *Downs* with you perched in a chair, try lying down on the floor. Most dogs will think this is tremendous and start licking your face or trying to play with you. A few dogs will find this spooky if they have never seen you like this before. If your dog spooks, give her a few minutes to get used to this new picture, then try your commands. If she's just licking your face, let her do it for a minute, then get started issuing commands.

The review procedure is a bit different now as it is difficult to give readable hand signals to a dog from this position. The key to teaching this quickly is to have the unknown new cue (the one given while you are lying down) predict an already learned cue such as a hand signal. Do the following while lying down:

1. Give the verbal cue for *Sit* or *Down*.

2. Wait two seconds.

3. If your dog does it, praise lavishly and pay. You can get out of *your* down to feed for position. If she breaks her position when you move, just reposition her before paying. Great kudos to both of you if she does it this fast, by the way!

4. If she doesn't do it, break out of your position just enough to give her a readable hand signal, something she's very likely to respond to.

5. Pay, even though you had to help.

Practice until your dog can do smooth position changes with you lying on the floor giving verbal cues.

Back to the Dog

Another fun variation is to stand facing a corner so your dog is behind you. Once again, you'll get a peek into how her brain operates when she struggles initially. The "picture" of your back is very different from the "picture" most of us train in: standing, with the dog within a sixty-degree radius in front of us a few feet away. Change any of these elements and you have a generalization challenge. Once again, the key to getting this version of verbal response online is to have your verbal cue in this position predict a cue your dog will easily recognize. The sequence, therefore, is:

1. Give the verbal cue into the corner, without turning your head.

2. Wait two seconds, paying immediately if your dog responds properly (prodigy!).

3. After two seconds, turn around and issue the hand signal for the position you cued.

4. Pay, even though you helped.

5. Repeat until smooth.

Chapter 9

Taking It on the Road

Taking it on the road is trainer slang for behavior generalization: can the dog perform for a new person, such as a family member who didn't participate in the training, and in new places? Dogs are sensitive to these changes, much more so than we are. You may be amazed at how a dog's trained behavior temporarily falls apart when you do something as simple as practice in a new location in your house.

TRANSFER TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES

In spite of sermons you may have heard in obedience classes about the need for perfect consistency and for all family members to participate in the training, the reality I've found over the decades is that one person is inevitably the keenest and ends up being the workhorse. It can bog things down, in fact, to try to coordinate efforts and parse out training duties. The more people involved, the less gets done, very much as it is with committees. And, although others don't actually undermine the effort, having one primary trainer do the initial legwork is perfectly fine from a broadened responsiveness perspective, as it is absolutely possible to add other people late in the game. You just need to know the tricks of the trade.

The occasional dog will seamlessly transfer all his training to any person who issues commands, but most dogs will need some transfer exercises. This is because dogs are very specific-case oriented, as far as their learning apparatus is concerned. There are two parts to this:

- Dogs readily learn when—and from whom—there are going to be real consequences and when there are not. Anybody who would like a dog to be responsive to them needs to start getting themselves strongly associated with consequences.
- Your dog may not "read" a cue from a person who hasn't worked him until now because it looks or sounds different from the original trainer.

The following exercises will address both pieces to dogs being specific-case oriented: motivation and comprehension, the *why* and *what* of dog training.

Transfer Training I

1. Set up the new person next to you somewhere quiet in the house—you want it to feel easy to the dog. Arm the new person with most of the bait in a bait pouch or plastic bag.

2. Now run the dog through all his basics: *Sit, Down, Stay, Leave It, Come*, and also come when called away from a food reward on the counter or table, and a short loose-leash walk toward a small pile of food. Pay the first couple of times each behavior is done correctly, pointing out to the new person whenever you feed for position. This is the first task for the new trainer. After a few warm-up demos, every time the dog gets it right, say something like "Pay" or "Reward now" so that the new person can dispense the reward to the dog at the right time.

   You give the cues, you make the decisions when to pay, but they do the actual paying. Coach the new trainer to feed for position as much as possible but don't be bossy and superior, as it's very bad for the cause. No, "NO! Not like that, like THIS" is pretty crushing for someone trying something for the first time. There won't be a second time. The new trainer should come away with a sense of dog training being an absolute piece of cake. This is your highest priority.

3. Spend five minutes doing this, thank the new trainer, and make a date for another round in the next day or so.

Transfer Training II

1. Set up the new person with bait again, just as in *Transfer Training I*; however, this time let them cue *Sits* and *Downs*, decide when to pay and how to pay for position.

2. Focus your coaching on two things:
   • Prompt the new trainer to be generous with rewards, to always pay when the dog is right ("Pay now . . . excellent!")
   • Catch the new trainer whenever they remember to feed for position ("Perfect—he collected his reward in a sit."). When they neglect to feed for position, say nothing.

3. After a few minutes, thank the person again, and set another time within the next day or so.

Transfer Training III

1. Set up the new trainer with the bait and let them warm up the dog with *Sits* and *Downs*. Catch them when they feed for position ("Nice feed for position there!").

2. Ask them if they would like to try *Stay*. If they say sure, show them a walk-around stay, feeding for position at the end. Then invite them to try. If they say no, stick with *Sits* and *Downs*.

3. If the dog breaks, address the dog but not the trainer ("Too bad! You have to hold your stay for Richard the same way you do for me.") to emphasize that the dog made a mistake, not the trainer. Invite the trainer to try again ("This is really good for him, but according to the book, it's also tricky."). Prompt them to feed for position at the end of their first successful exercise.

4. Show them a double walk-around and repeat the same coaching regime. If they do a nice double walk-around, celebrate with martinis.

At this point, ask the new trainer whether they would mind running the dog through his behaviors at a time when you are going out but they will be home. Have a nice convenient bag full of fresh bait ready for them and tell them you need to get rid of all of it. Then go away and leave them alone. When you come back, ask how they did. If they report that they did well, or even okay, say "Wow." If they didn't train, say nothing.

CHANGE TRAINING LOCATIONS

Aside from the obvious benefit of having a dog who performs in locations other than the one in which he was originally trained, practicing in different locations gives you an appreciation of how your dog's brain is unlike yours in this regard, and it has the effect of overall strengthening of behavior.

Locations I

1. Enlist a friend or family member who's willing to have you and your dog in their house for a ten- or fifteen-minute training session. Choose a friend or family member who doesn't have any pets, and, ideally, a home where your dog has never been. Bring a small unexpected gift for the friend. It's a really nice favor they're doing.

2. Make sure the dog has emptied both bladder and bowels before heading over. Even well-housetrained dogs do not always generalize perfectly to

new places—the same generalization issue you're addressing with this trip applies to housetraining as well.

3. Head over well-armed with good bait. For the first five or six minutes, let the dog off leash to wander around the friend's house. Close the doors to any off-limits rooms, but otherwise let the dog explore under your supervision. We want the novelty to wear off slightly, and this is far and away best achieved off leash.

4. After five or six minutes, call the dog over. If he comes, pay lavishly, then ignore him. If he hangs around you (he might start throwing behaviors at you—this is good), commence training. If he doesn't come, or comes, collects, and then goes off exploring again, no worries. Give him another five minutes and try again.

5. Once he's interested in you, run him through all his basics, in the following order:

   • *Sits* and *Downs*, in random order

   • Walk-around *Stays* both while sitting and lying down

   • *Leave It*

   • Loose-leash walking to a pile of goodies

   • Recall away from a prize on the counter

Be prepared to Drop, especially early on. If you need hand signals for your positions, don't worry. If you need to review the walk-around *Stay* two steps at a time, do so. It is *extremely important* that you work at the dog's level. Do not feel disappointed if he is much weaker than he has been at home. Think like a trainer. A trainer would think, "Ah! I've uncovered and worked on a generalization weakness. Brilliant!" Just this one session in a new place, provided the dog wins a lot, is very, very productive in your overall training plan.

Quit training as soon as you've done a set or two of each behavior. It's very important that you quit before the dog feels like quitting. Leave him wanting more.

Locations II

1. Repeat *Locations I* at the same place, if your friend doesn't mind.

2. Do *Locations I* at a brand-new house, again one without pets. Do the five- to six-minute saturation (letting the house get a bit old via exploration) of the ambient distractions before attempting to train. It is much, much better to play hard to get, having the dog come to you with some eagerness, than to try to cajole and get the attention of a dog

who is overwhelmed with new sights, sounds, and smells. He'll get better at coping and focusing in these circumstances if you play your cards right. And playing your cards right means biding your time and training when your dog is ready. Training a dog without good focus and leverage is known in the training biz as trying to *push a rope*. Once you're training, be diligent about Push, Drop, Stick.

3. Come back to this second location another time.

4. Now train at a third house, still one without pets. Was your dog interested in you sooner? If he was keen to train immediately or almost immediately, move on to *Locations III*. If it took him the whole five or six minutes—or more—train at one more house.

If you run out of houses, train in a different room in the same house.

Locations III

1. Arm yourself with really good rewards and go to a pet store, one where you can bring your dog inside. Go at a quiet time, so that there are no other dogs there.

2. With your dog on leash, enter and stroll the aisles for five or six minutes, letting your dog sniff and explore, with you basically following and supervising him.

3. After five or six minutes, ask him to sit. If you get nothing, spend another five minutes exploring the store, ignoring him while he wanders around. Resist the temptation to hang around in one spot. A good saturation job involves letting the dog discover that the grass isn't greener over there. Everything gets old with enough exposure. We're building up his satiation muscle so that he becomes more and more jaded at new sights, sounds, and smells.

4. Once your dog is interested in training—he does a quick *Sit* on a single verbal cue—run him through the following:

❑ *Sits* and *Downs*—Be prepared to use hand signals or even a lure for *Down*. *Down* in a place like this is a big watershed.

❑ A walk-around *Sit-Stay*—Again, expect breaks and Drop as needed. The dog must win the game often in this new place.

❑ If successful up until now, do a walk-around *Down-Stay*. If it's been tough (you're using lures and you didn't make it to a full walk-around *Sit-Stay*), quit, wander the store a bit more, go home, and have a nap.

Locations IV

1. Go back to the same pet store, this time trying some *Sits* and *Downs* immediately upon entering and finding a quiet spot.

2. If your dog performs *Sits* and *Downs* without the five- to six-minute saturation time, do a *Sit-Stay*, a *Down-Stay*, a *Leave It*, and then leave the store, telling him how very clever he is. You are also now something of a rock star, having outgrown this location.

3. If your dog is unfocused but performs after five or six minutes of saturation, work him at his level on *Sits* and *Downs,* and if these go well, on a walk-around *Stay.* In this case you will need to come back to this location possibly one or two more times until your dog will work immediately.

Locations V

1. Go with your dog to an outdoor green space, such as a park or playground. Choose a small area and wander around there for five to six minutes, letting him sniff, pee, and explore to his heart's content.

2. After five or six minutes, ask him to sit. If he does, pay lavishly and then practice the following:

   - *Sits* and *Downs—Downs* may be very tricky here so don't hesitate to Drop, even to a lure if necessary. It is catastrophic for him not to win much because you price the behavior out of the market (set the standard higher than he can achieve).

   - *Leave its* and walk-around *Sit-Stays*

   - Ten-foot loose-leash walks to a pile of goodies

   - Optional: If all goes well, walk-around *Down-Stays.* If the *Down* is shaky, or you're losing your dog a lot to distractions, scrap the *Down-Stay.*

Based on the pattern of generalization training so far, what do you think the next exercise is going to be? If you guess right, you are thinking like a trainer.

Locations VI

1. Go back to the same outdoor location as *Locations V,* and see if your dog will work for you immediately upon arrival. If he doesn't, give him five or six minutes of saturation time. If he never worked at all, or very

little, in *Locations V*, it is worth your while to find a place to sit and read for half an hour, ignoring your dog. You can sit on his leash or tie it to the bench next to you. After thirty minutes, go home. Don't be nasty or stern with the dog—it is not his fault that this is how his brain works. Keep your cool but vow to saturate this location: plan another trip.

2. As soon as your dog will work, do the following:

- *Sit-Stay* with walk-around
- Loose-leash walking
- *Leave It*
- Build up some duration on a *Sit-Stay*, doing one repetition each of the following increments:

Ten seconds
Twenty seconds
Five seconds
Thirty seconds
Ten seconds
Three seconds
Fifteen seconds
One minute

If your dog pulls off the one-minute *Stay*, it's time for a new location. If he didn't, plan on one more trip to this spot. It's trainer's choice whether to use a five- to six-minute pretraining saturation.

Mixing On- and Off-Leash Dogs

When a dog spies another dog, unless he is fearful or dislikes other dogs, he will feel an overwhelming need to investigate. Dogs with normal social skills have important greeting rituals, which involve delivering appropriate body language to the other dog and sniffing the rear quarters. Leashes really throw a monkey wrench into this system by hampering the dog's ability both to investigate and to deliver the right body language. This is why so many dogs who are very friendly and social with dogs when off leash may put on ferocious-looking displays when on leash. A basic biological urge has been artificially frustrated, which is why trainers usually call this *barrier frustration* or *leash frustration*. Barrier frustration is greatly worsened when nearby dogs are off leash, prancing around and possibly teasing the leashed dog.

Locations VII

Do this exercise only if your dog likes other dogs. If he is feisty or fearful with other dogs, skip it. You can also hire a competent professional to improve his feistiness or fearfulness, in which case you can try this exercise later.

1. Go someplace where there are dogs. Some good options include the following:
   - The house of a friend who has a friendly dog(s)
   - A dog park or designated off-leash area
   - The same pet store you used earlier, but now go at a peak time when there will be other dogs inside with shoppers
   - Near a place where dog training classes are held, so that leashed dogs are coming and going nearby.
   - To an outdoor café where you have noticed that people bring dogs.
2. If the dog(s) at this place are leashed, keep your dog leashed too. If it is an off-leash area, let your dog off leash as well. Leashed and unleashed dogs together in the same place are a volatile mix.
3. If you are at an off-leash area, give your dog six minutes to socialize, run around, and do whatever he wants. Do not try calling him during this time.
4. If your dog and the dog(s) nearby is on leash, commence training immediately.

Protecting Your Come Cue

One of the most common errors I see dog owners making is *wearing out their cues,* especially the cue for Come (Recall). They chant it over and over and over. This repetition is, in fact, what you would do if you wanted to *get rid of* response to this cue! So, rule one is not to give the cue unless you are willing to bet fifty bucks that the dog will come when you issue it the first time. Rule two is to be careful about inadvertently punishing the dog for coming. While most people know not to call the dog over and then get violent or yell at him, many people slip up at places like dog parks, where they call the dog over to end his off-leash playtime. While eventually his coming when called will be strong enough to withstand such everyday use, when you're in the training stage, avoid calling him over to end fun.

Locations VIII: Off-Leash Option

1. After the six-minute saturation effort, try calling your dog over to you. If he comes, praise and reward really, really heavily, then just send him back to play. Remember, it's not a good idea to do a lot of obedience for valuable rewards in this kind of context as it can prompt squabbles among the dogs.

2. If your dog doesn't come, don't keep calling—this is very bad for the integrity of your Come cue. Ignore him for another five or six minutes, then try one more time.

3. If during the saturation time he happens to come over and check in with you, praise and reward him, but don't give your recall cue and don't ask for anything else. Just "Hi there! So good!" (smoochie smoochie smoochie—big food reward, then ignore him).

4. If he hasn't checked in and doesn't come after the second saturation period, ignore him the rest of the time. This is still a fabulous proofing opportunity because it is such a major distraction, but it's not going to come cheaply. You'll need to go to this location at least a couple more times. But it will be worth it in the end. Let your dog play and explore as long as you can conveniently stay, then collect him and head home. Don't try using your Come cue.

Return to this location and retry the exercise. Do two five- to six-minute saturation periods preceding each attempt. If you come up empty again, here are a few things you can do to tip the balance a bit for your third attempt:

- Bring higher-value or novel rewards. If you're using food, bring your dog when he's hungry.

- See if you can go to the same place but at a time when it's less busy. If you're using a dog park, there will be peak hours and times when there are just a couple of dogs. You can even do the location without dogs. These are all good splits.

- If you're training at a friend's house where there are dogs, after the saturation period, put the dogs in a room with the door closed and give your dog a minute or so to see that they're not coming back out. Then try training. If it goes well, let the dogs out, allow for another five-minute saturation, then have a go with the dogs present.

Once your dog is five for five, Push. Here are the steps and possible splits you will need (fill in the last three steps below):

Coming in Off-Leash Area: Steps and Splits
Off-leash area but without other dogs present, after five- to six-minute saturation
Off-leash area but without other dogs present, no saturation period
Off-leash area with one or two other dogs present, after five- to six-minute saturation
Off-leash area with one or two other dogs present, no saturation period
Off-leash area with at least three other dogs present, after five- to six-minute saturation, dog hungry and novel, interesting food rewards
Off-leash area with at least three other dogs present, after five- to six-minute saturation, regular rewards
Off-leash area with at least three other dogs present, no saturation period
New off-leash area with one or two other dogs present, after five- to six-minute saturation

Did you have any difficulty coming up with the final three steps in this exercise? If you haven't tried to, study the sequence and then take a stab at it. The answer is:

New off-leash area with one or two other dogs present, no saturation
New off-leash area with at least three other dogs present, five- to six-minute saturation
New off-leash area with at least three other dogs present, no saturation

It's also reasonable to include the *dog especially hungry/novel rewards* split, even though it's the second off-leash area. Recalls in the presence of other dogs are pretty difficult if your dog is social.

Chapter 10

Social Applications

The main issue when visitors come to your home is usually the dog jumping up to greet them when they arrive. The reason dogs jump up is that they are strongly prewired to lick faces when greeting. It's their version of smiling, shaking hands, and hugging to say, "Hello friend!" This collides with human culture, however, as most people find a dog jumping up on them annoying or scary.

I recommend a two-pronged approach to jumping up: strongly reinforcing sitting in any greeting context, and immediate penalties any time your dog jumps, once she has had some practice at sitting to greet. Don't attempt this until you have completed *Sit* and, even better, *Sit-Stay*. We'll practice first with you, then with other household members, and finally with visitors. Following are the no-fail exercises.

SIT TO GREET

Sit to greet is the most common example of what trainers call *differential reinforcement of incompatible behavior* (DRI): the teaching of a behavior, in this case sitting, that is mutually exclusive to a problem behavior, in this case jumping up to greet. Dogs can't *Sit-Stay* and jump up at the same time. Teaching dogs what we do want in a given context—sitting to greet us—is better than simply punishing them for what we don't want: jumping up.

Sit to Greet I

1. Muster a common front from all family members. They don't have to do any training until later on—you'll do most of the heavy lifting here—but *they must agree to stop rewarding jumping.* This means not patting, greeting, or paying attention to the dog when she jumps up on them. It especially means not letting the dog face-lick by bending down enough for her to do so as soon as she jumps up. This is disastrous for the cause as the most potent reward at this moment is facial proximity. If jumping works to achieve this, it's a losing battle.

2. Once you've got agreement from other household members that they won't undo your training, start training. Whenever you come home, stand bolt upright, even looking up to the ceiling slightly as the dog jumps on you. After a couple of seconds, say "Sit." Most dogs will be too unglued to do it, so they'll continue jumping. Try a *Sit* hand signal, keeping your head tilted away from your dog. Keep ignoring her until she sits. It might take quite a while the first few times. Hang in there.

3. When she finally sits, get immediately warm and fuzzy, praise, look at her, and start to bend down to greet her face to face. This will make your dog jump up again, which will make you go bolt upright again. Think cause and effect: jumping makes you stand ramrod straight, looking at the ceiling, and sitting makes you gooey. And remember it's not stubbornness or obstinacy on her part: she's as wired up to do this as you are to smile at a friend you're picking up at the airport.

4. Eventually, your arrival will get old and you'll be able to do a perfunctory greeting while your dog holds a sit.

5. Take an extra few seconds, go out the door, and come in again right away. Ask your dog to sit right away and as soon as she does, praise and pat her. You can even give an optional (surprise) food reward at this point. You are probably now saturated enough for her to get it right immediately. If not, and if you have time, wait until she finally sits and then go out and come in again until she gets it on the first try. If it takes her many tries, don't despair. She'll get better. It's also okay to abandon ship (no face lickies though) after this second attempt and just go about your business, then try again next time. Always do one reentry though.

Push to the next exercise when you have had five in a row where the dog holds her *Sit* without jumping after you go out and come in again (the second try, step 5).

Why Do Dogs Lick Faces?

Dogs are not only descended from wolves, they are really the same species, just a domesticated variety. When adult wolves hunt, they gorge and return to weaned puppies with full bellies. The puppies eagerly lick at the mouths of the adults, who then reflexively regurgitate food for them. It's an elegant transport system, which is also employed by African Hunting Dogs, a more distantly related species, but one with a similar ecology. This urge to

face-lick when reunited after an absence is retained into adulthood, but its role morphs to that of greeting and affiliation rather than food soliciting. This retention into adulthood of an infantile trait is called *neoteny* (*neo* is new or young, and *teny* is from the Greek *teinein,* which means to stretch). While most dogs have lost the regurgitation reflex, virtually all have a strong face-licking urge in any greeting context. It's friendly behavior. And because we humans are vertical, dogs jump up to access our faces.

Sit to Greet II

1. As soon as you come in the door, tell your dog to sit, praising and greeting her if she does—get down to her level and smooch. But now a new rule: If she jumps, you not only go bolt upright, but now you also say "Too bad," and then leave, closing the door behind you. Wait a couple of seconds and then reenter, again saying "Sit." Same rules: If your dog jumps, you leave. If she sits, you greet. Timing matters here—if you can be very quick, it'll feel much more like cause and effect to the dog, which will accelerate learning.

2. Keep saying "Too bad" and exiting when your dog jumps. The first time she holds it together enough not to jump, crouch down to her level and do a warm, face-kissy greeting. If this is not your thing, praise her warmly and pat her. The facial proximity is the potent reward here, though, so if you can see fit to do so, let her lick your face when she does a nice job of sitting without jumping.

Push when your dog is five for five on the first entry: five arrivals home with zero jumping.

Sit to Greet II: Training Transfer Option

Now that the initial instillation is complete, inquire among family members if any would like to have the dog's new sit to greet transferred to them. They'll have a bit of practicing to do but not nearly as much as you had as "trainer one."

Whoever is keenest will go next. Before doing the door-greeting exercise, do a couple of sets on the following timing drill for "trainer two" at a quiet time in the house.

1. Get a small bag of treats. Demonstrate the following: Ask the dog to sit, and praise when she does. Take a treat, hold it out in front of you at

your head level, and then slowly, *verrrrrry* slowly start lowering it toward the dog. You're checking to see if she'll crack and jump up to meet the treat halfway. Be ridiculously strict—if she brings one paw one inch off the ground, the treat flies back up. It's actually easier for the dog this way than fudging it and letting her kind of, sort of move a bit.

2. If the dog breaks her sit, zing the treat back up to full height and start over. Keep lowering it if she keeps sitting. This will start to feel like a *Stay* or *Leave It* to the dog, so she should catch on quickly that not moving is the way to win here.

3. Once she's won one treat by holding her *Sit,* hand the supply to trainer two and let them have at the dog. Pay close attention and praise their timing by tagging it with phrases like: "Beautiful! You were so quick— very cause and effect!" "Wow! Fantastically hair-trigger that time—so clear to her that if she flinches it's gone!"

Practice this with other interested family members.

Push on five for five treat collections with zero jumping.

Sit to Greet III—Family Members Take Over Training

1. The next time you go out and trainer two (or other family member who has completed the previous exercise) stays home, call them shortly before you get there so they can watch you get the dog to sit when you come in. If the dog makes a mistake and jumps, it's actually not bad for the cause as you can demonstrate your lickety-split "too bad" and exit maneuver. It's also okay if she does it perfectly as it will impress and inspire trainer two, making them itchy to have the same response.

2. Once you've demonstrated what this looks like, it's time to coach trainer two at doing it themselves. Next time they go out and you're home (or you both go out together), set it up that you can be on hand when they return.

3. Prompt them through the "too bad" and exit routine when the dog jumps on them. Don't be stern about it. "No, no, faster, damn it" will only paralyze your trainee more. Coaching sounds more like: "Okay, say 'Sit.' Oops, she's jumping. Now say 'Too bad.' Great. Now skedaddle out

Types of Visitors

Visitors and guests fall into two groups: those who will be happy to pitch in and help you train your dog, and those who you can't afford to have the dog jump on even once or twice. The former group is the one you want to help you train your dog's behavior. For the latter group, put the dog away when they come over until she has done a few rounds with "helper" people. Once she's proofed, the dog will sit politely for everybody, including people who would have been distressed or offended by your dog jumping on them.

Another reason not to risk letting your dog make a mistake with people who aren't in on the training is that they may inadvertently react in a way that undermines the cause. Many dogs find it rewarding when people make physical contact with them, so pushing them off may not "read" as a negative consequence. Any bending or squealing could likewise reward the jumping. This could culminate in a selective jumper, a dog who jumps on the worst of all possible people! Even if you then time the dog out, or even get violent with her, the person's reaction may be the most powerful consequence in this context.

An important principle of dog training is not to ever let the dog discover any circumstances in which the cause and effects you want do not exist. In other words, if you prematurely give your dog the opportunity to jump on certain people without any "too-bads" or exits by them, she could think something like, "Hmm. Sometimes that rule must not be in effect. Oh, I see! It's those people who wear silk!" Dogs are very good at discriminating specific cases, remember, and your dog could very well use this ability to learn that the best way to get facial proximity with a certain group is to jump, whereas with others it is to sit. For this reason, we're going to use only people who are "in on it" until the dog has a strong default sit.

the door." Go out with them and talk it through. "Okay, here's our second entry. She might get it right and she might screw up again. If she jumps, say 'Too bad' as fast as you can, and then we get out the door quick. If she sits, bend over and kiss her. Ready?" And then tag everything they do right, being as specific as you can. "Good one—you not only bent over and got smoochy when she sat, when that made her jump, you straightened up faster than *I* could have. Brilliant. Okay, now we're out the door, let's do one more. I think we're close."

4. If they are doing everything without any prompting or reminding from you, they're ready to go solo. If they're shakier, do one more arrival home. And a third if necessary. Although it looks simple on paper, everything happens very fast once you're working the exercise. And one of the goals is lightning reactions, the cause and effect that helps the dog learn so well.

Sit to Greet IV: Visitors and Guests

1. Invite someone over who is willing to spend a couple of minutes practicing at the door with you. You can give them an overview of what's going to happen or just tell them all will be revealed when they get there. If you've coached family members already, you'll have honed your coaching skills. If this visitor is actually "trainer two," read over the coaching suggestions in *Sit to Greet II* and *III*.

2. When the person arrives, you say "Sit." If your dog sits, voilà, end of training. But she probably won't. So when your dog jumps, say "Too bad," and then hustle out the door with the person. Then you can debrief what just happened. To try and talk them through it without them ever having seen you model the reactions is too slow.

3. Go over the procedure, making reference to what just happened. "The objective is *cause and effect* for the dog. If she even starts to jump, she's told she blew it—that's what the "too bad" is for—and then the very thing she most wants, social contact, disappears. Saying 'no no no' or pushing her around is just more social contact so would actually function as a reward. Neat, eh? Wanna try another one?" Then do another one. If the person seems comfortable and interested, try coaching them a bit. If not, do all the work again. It'll still work as long as the visitor is removed when the dog jumps. Whether you prompt the visitor out or they leave on their own is moot to the dog.

4. Repeat until you get a *Sit*, hopefully sooner rather than later.

5. Do this procedure with everyone who visits who is willing to help—don't forget to put the dog away when someone visits who the dog must not jump on, until she's ready, as described below.

Is it Bad to Allow My Dog to Jump on Me Sometimes?

Lots of people let their dogs jump on them when roughhousing and during greetings. Letting the dog do this is in no way an insidious slippery slope to chaos, aggression, or disobedience. Many people want no jumping at all, and then there are some who don't want the dog jumping on them uninvited. If this sounds like you—no jumping during greeting but okay when you're in the mood—it's absolutely possible to train in a signal that lets the dog know "Okay, go ahead and jump now!" The dog just needs practice so she can learn to discriminate when the no-jump rule is in effect and when the go-ahead-and-jump permission has been given. Once you've de-jumped your dog with the exercises, start practicing the following:

1. Give your "it's okay to jump" cue—something like "hug time" is cute.
2. Prompt your dog to jump on you—this will take time as you've recently been training against the behavior.
3. When she finally jumps, laugh and praise.
4. When in the no-jump contexts, continue with the rules as usual. Your dog may temporarily get a bit wobbly, but with a few reps she will get it: "Oh! I should never jump *except* when you say 'Hug time!' I get it now!" Remember, dogs are good at specific cases and it will serve you here.

Practice with all cooperating visitors until you have had five in a row without even an attempt to jump, even on the initial entry—then you can let the dog greet all people, praising sitting always, and rewarding with visitor crouching and facial contact when possible. This will maintain the behavior.

FOOD AND ITEMS ON TABLES

Dogs are carnivorous animals, but not pure predators. They are also very well adapted for scavenging. They have a ready regurgitation reflex, which allows them to easily unload a poor choice of food item. Dogs also have guts that can handle bone, bacteria that would kill you and me, and brain software that makes them grab and eat first and ask questions later.

What If She's So Fast She Steals the Food?

The slowest dog is probably faster than the fastest Olympic athlete, so it's always necessary to set up the situation so that you have the advantage. If you don't, the dog could conceivably try the fast-grab strategy and find out that it works just fine. Your dog may actually be entering training with this strategy already entrenched. If so, we have to be extra-diligent to make sure she doesn't win the speed game anymore. This will mean stationing yourself closer to the food items, for blocking purposes, and giving your *Leave It* cue earlier in her approach or display of interest. Once a reward history is established for refraining from touching, you can gradually cut it finer, edging your position a little farther from the goodies and letting her get a little closer before cuing the behavior. Even dogs with strong histories of success with a food-grabbing strategy can be deprogrammed this way. Whatever you do, control the situation so that your dog's best strategy is to refrain and collect from your hidden stash because grabbing just doesn't pay off anymore. Food in the open is an illusion.

For dog owners who would like the dog to be polite and eat a uniform diet of dog food, this presents a challenge. This is where you get to apply your *Leave It* cue. Here are some exercises to transfer this behavior from sessions to real life.

Food on Table I

1. Arm yourself with a supply of treats, but make it discreet. A great idea is to load some beef jerky or freeze-dried liver in tiny pieces in a bag, pocket it, and then go about your day. At first the dog will be keen, but over time she will give up on the notion that this is predictive of any treats going her way. This is exactly what we want—a forgotten secret reward stash.

2. When you've got a few minutes to train, set a few food items out on tables that the dog has stolen from or that you would like thoroughly trained to be off-limits. Anything goes, except things such as onions, raisins or grapes, macadamia nuts, and chocolate, which are toxic to dogs.

3. Station yourself somewhere nearby within clear eyeshot of the food items and look as natural as you can, pretending to read, watch TV, or work on your computer.

4. If the dog makes a clear move toward the food, say "Leave it." If she backs off, stops approaching it, sits, or lies down, or moves toward you, praise her warmly and give her one of the surprise rewards from your pocket. If she continues toward it, say "Too bad," leap to your feet, put the food away, and go back to your business. Wait a few minutes before trying again.

5. Stake her out again for a couple of minutes. If she doesn't try again, praise and give her several pieces, one at a time, from your pocket stash. It's important that she learn that ignoring the forbidden items is even better from her point of view than trying for one. There is a risk in these situations that the dog will learn "Oh I see, the way I get rewarded is to make a play for the food on the table, to get him to cue me to 'leave it.' I can do that."

As good as it is for the dog to obey your command, it's even better if she doesn't try in the first place, and the training needs to reflect that. One of the most common errors we all make on a daily basis with our dogs is ignoring them when they're being good, resting quietly and refraining from what could have been annoying or disallowed behavior.

> **Repeat this every day or so until your dog hasn't even tried five times in a row.**

Food on Table II

1. Arm yourself with stealth rewards again. We don't want the dog only obeying when she thinks we're loaded, so it pays off to be Houdini sometimes and produce rewards from seemingly thin air.

2. This time, it needs to look less like a setup, so either have someone else place the food items while you are in another room with the dog (closing the door may be a good idea here—dogs have excellent fridge door opening etc. radar, which could cause your dog to head toward the setup), or else you place the food while the dog is otherwise occupied or out on a walk. She can't see the food go down.

3. Station yourself in a different spot from *Food on Table I*, but still where you have a clear view of the action.

4. Don't call the dog into the room. If she happens in along with you, fine (and be alert as she might try before you seat yourself). If she trundles in later, also fine. Act as natural as possible. Just as in *Food on Table I*,

reward your dog heavily for leaving the food all alone, reward her a regular amount for honoring *Leave It* on cue, and abruptly end the operation with your "too bad" for any naughtiness.

Repeat this every day or so until your dog hasn't even tried five times in a row.

Repeat exercise II on all the surfaces in your house you need proofed against food stealing.

WHAT'S A TOY AND WHAT'S OFF LIMITS

Dogs differ dramatically in their natural tendency to pick up objects, carry things around, and chew things. Some don't want to mouth anything even if encouraged by you. For other dogs, though, it seems one of their great life pleasures to pick up things and run around, bury them, chew them, etc. The key to solving this problem is recognizing that it is relatively innocent behavior—she just wants to have fun—and that the only issue is her choice of objects. So the goal of training is to teach your dog that it's fun to pick up and chew her toys and do what she will with them, but unproductive to try touching any of your stuff.

In the case of young puppies, it's a simple matter of redirection. Just as you would take a set of car keys out of an infant's hand and substitute a teething object, the goal with puppies is to supply them with appropriate items, encourage them to pick up, carry, and chew these all they want, and simply remove inappropriate objects should they get hold of one. I strongly disagree with training philosophies that advise coming down hard and fast on small puppies putting things in their mouths. These are babies engaging in normal behavior for their species. There is no need for harshness.

If you have an adult dog with no problem at all, you can skip this section altogether. If later a problem arises, you can always come back and do the exercises. If your adult dog grabs stuff and plays keep away or chews them up, these are the exercises for you. Notice that before teaching your dog not to touch your things, we're going to spend some effort teaching her legal outlets for this natural behavior. Otherwise it's a raw deal for the dog, which simply isn't fair.

Toy Types

If your dog doesn't have many toys, purchase some. If you've noticed prefer-ences—she's drawn to laundry, drawn to hard objects, likes to chew things up—this can inform your toy selections. Here are the options:

Toy Type	Good For	Don't Get If
Plush toys, squeaky toys, rope toys	Dogs who like to fetch, run around with toys, tug, dissect	Your dog consumes (swallows) pieces.
Kong toys—stuffed with dog food and other nutritious goodies	Dogs who like chewing. Also a great project to help a dog pass her time while alone	You can't bear any mess whatsoever on floors or carpets.
Rawhide, bully sticks, pig's ears, Greenies	Dogs who like to chew	Your dog swallows big chunks or gets sick.
Sterilized bones, smoked bones	Industrial-strength chewers	Your dog breaks off and swallows big pieces.
Balls, Frisbees, tug toys	Maniacal fetchers, dogs who love to tug	You are uncomfortable playing Tug with your dog or have a large dog and small children who may imitate you playing Tug and get hurt. And no Frisbee for dogs who have any joint problems.

Spend some time getting your dog into her toys, as follows:

- **Retrieve toys.** These are toys that sit on the floor in the house and you or your dog can fling them around. As soon as she goes after one and picks it up, cheer her on, clap your hands, and see if you can get her to come to you. Stay seated. If she doesn't come back, you mustn't chase after her as this will reward keep-away, which is not the game here. Time is on your side here. As much fun as your dog might have parad-ing around with the toy, it's much, much more exciting to bring it back as you have the magical power to make it "run away" from her, which plugs into her predator software. Moving stuff is more fun than "dead"

stuff. Let her learn this organically, by experiencing both what it's like to hoard the object and what it's like to chase it after a throw. Once she learns that she can get you to bring it to life *again* by bringing it back, you're in business.

- **Kong toys.** Kong toys are sturdy, made of safe rubber, bounce randomly and oh-so enticingly when a dog drops it, are washable, and hollow, allowing you to put stuff inside to give your dog a puzzle to solve. Zoos wrestle with the question all the time of how to enrich the lives of their predatory species, largely because such animals spend a huge amount of time and energy hunting. Once these animals have free food, they can become bored and under-stimulated to the point of mental illness. Dogs are also (partly) a predatory species, designed to work for their food. This is part of the beauty of using food as an obedience motivator and also the beauty of Kongs. The first time you stuff a Kong for your dog, it needs to be easy for her to get the goodies out. If her first experience is *expensive* behavior yielding meager rewards, she is much less likely to get hooked. If you get her hooked, you can then make the projects much more diffi-cult, which will take her more effort and time, but which she won't mind doing as you've upped this level of difficulty gradually.
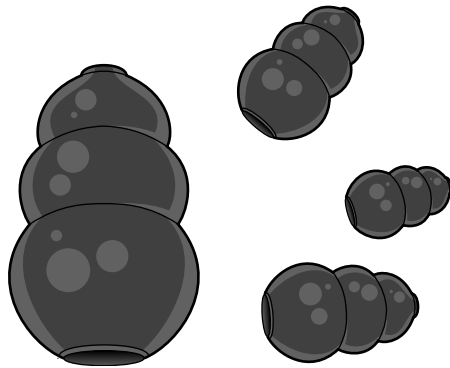
- **Consumable chew toys.** Rawhides, pig's ears, bully sticks, and Greenies, among other chewables, are meant to be slowly consumed by the dog. Some of the industrial-strength chewing breeds, such as Labradors, get through them within minutes or hours, whereas others may work on the same item for days or weeks. It's worth auditioning these products to see if they suit your dog. Buy an assortment, put them all down, like in a taste test, and see which one she ends up spending the most time on after initial tryouts. You may find there are some she doesn't even touch. Once you know her preferences, you can keep her supplied with her favorites.

Kong Starter Recipe

If your dog doesn't like any of the ingredients, please feel free to substitute.

1 cup of your dog's kibble
2 diced baby carrots
1/2 cup Liver Biscotti
1 jar meat baby food

Mix ingredients together in a bowl, and then pack it loosely into a Kong. This shouldn't be too difficult for your dog to unpack because there are no pieces so big you had to squeeze them in through the hole, and it's not frozen. If your dog gets everything out quickly, you can up the level of difficulty with some larger pieces of dog cookie, beef jerky, or dried chicken strips, and/or freeze it once you've finished packing. Both these measures make it more of a challenging puzzle, which will occupy her longer. You can make up your own recipes or look for inspiration on the Kong Company website, kongcompany.com.

Provision of appropriate chew toys is by no means a luxury in my opinion. Chew toys are the dog equivalent of books and movies for us. While it is quite possible to get you to the end of your life on a balanced diet, water, and shelter, think of how different your quality of life would be if there were no more reading, Internet surfing, TV, movies, or other ways to pass the time.

- **Real bones.** These are commercially available as both stark white sterilized joints and smoked with remaining gristly material on them. You can also give butcher soup-type bones, provided they are given raw. There is massive controversy over raw diets and I'm not going to get into the various arguments here. The final authority is your own veterinarian. The first time you give your dog a real bone, be on hand to supervise and to avoid creating an association between this novel object and you leaving, which is usually a big disappointment for dogs. If it turns out she likes them, you can subsequently use them as blow-softeners for when you're gone, but it's optimal not to do that on the very first occasion.

- **Tug toys.** Some dogs love tugging and others have zero interest. While it is possible to fan small sparks of interest in your dog into a flame, it may not be worth your while if you have other toy and exercise options your dog likes better. If your dog is a tug-lover, however, it's a valuable and fun game, but has to be played with rules.

Games with Toys

Playing games is one of the great pleasures of life with dogs. Two of my favorites are Tug and I'm Gonna Get You! Both involve your dog's toys, and this has the important fringe benefit of raising their value to your dog. Both these games also involve rules, which serve to increase your motivational leverage over your dog, always front and center in the mind of a trainer.

Rules of Tug

1. The dog may not grab the toy until she is invited (*Okay, Get It*). If she grabs too early, the game ends: "Too bad." Drop the toy and walk away. It's a dead object now, much less fun.

2. The dog must let go when asked (*Out Please*). If she carries on tugging once you've asked her to let go, the game ends: "Too bad." Don't worry about not getting it back—she doesn't "win" anything. Dogs play Tug for different reasons than humans do. The dog is thrilled about how you can make the toy move and resist. Once you let go, it's dead, which is much less rewarding.

3. No teeth on skin or clothing. If while grabbing or adjusting her grip, your dog nips you—however accidentally—the game ends: "Too bad." One of the advantages of playing Tug is this important reminder about putting her teeth on people. She gets the opportunity to practice being very prudent about where her jaws are even when she's in midplay.

4. This one is a rule for you: exploit Tug as an obedience motivator. Before starting the game, ask for *Sits, Downs, Stays*, and tricks. Dogs that enjoy Tug will give you a lot of obedience per unit of game. You can also start and stop the game—partly to maintain your "out" cue, and partly to "recycle" the game as a reward by doing another round of obedience.

Tug I: "Out"

The key to a smooth rule installation is control. So, before playing the game in a full-throttle, raucous manner, we're going to try to keep it low-key, with a heavy emphasis on payoffs for following the rules. Then later we can rev it up.

1. Get a small supply of high-value food rewards into your pocket or pouch. Choose a toy that will be the official tug toy. This will help your dog discriminate when the game's on and when it's not.

2. Sit on a chair (you may stand if sitting makes it awkward to play, such as with a really big dog) and move the toy in an enticing manner to see if

she'll latch on right away. If she does, praise her "So good, so good," and then after a couple of seconds, say "Out." If she doesn't latch on right away, try to gauge whether she's just not interested, which means *Tug* may not be her cup of tea, or whether she's too distracted by your food rewards. If it's the latter case, make them less apparent and try again.

3. As soon as you say "Out," stop all movement of the toy—keep hold of it but make it go dead by squeezing it between your held knees, with as much of it pulled in as possible. Then just wait. This is much less fun and sooner or later she'll let go. When she does, praise her heavily and with the toy safely sat on by you, supply a food reward.

4. Start again from step 2. This procedure takes a bit of practice and each dog is a little different. Some are ultrakeen, so your main problem is getting them to "out" those first few times. Others like the tug well enough but once they've had a food reward, the tug toy has been trumped, and they start trotting out their obedience and trick repertoire to get you to pay them with a food reward. These types, because they don't latch on quite so grimly, can often be taught without food rewards to get the "out" going. The tug-maniacs will need food to compensate for outing until it's a strong enough behavior. At that point, interestingly, the reward for outing will be the sequence of obedience that leads to the reinitiation of the game. This is a lot of behavior—the out PLUS several obedience behaviors—for one reward, but for dogs who really love *Tug,* it's a small price to pay. Behavioral economics in action!

Practice like this until your dog has let go immediately on your verbal "out" five times in a row.

Won't Tug Games Make Her Aggressive?

For years and years people were admonished not to play Tug with their dog as it was feared this game would increase aggression or allow the dog to feel "dominant" over the owner. Tellingly, lots of people did it anyway, though they were sheepish to admit it to the Dog Training Tug Police. Finally, a study was performed by Peter Borchelt and Linda Goodloe, which looked at the incidence of aggression in dogs who played Tug regularly with their owners and those who didn't. There was no difference. Many of the sharpest trainers around in fact—those in the highly competitive sports of obedience, agility, and Flyball—use Tug games routinely as a reward for their dogs without any increase in aggression. And because it's such a great energy burner, it's a good exercise option. And fun.

Tug II: "Okay, Get It!"

In *Tug I*, we focused on "out," back-burnering the other rules, including letting the dog grab the toy as soon as we presented it. Now a new rule: she can't grab it until we say "Okay, get it!"

1. Sit as you did before, with the toy out of sight. Say "Okay, get it!" Whip the toy out and play some Tug. Ask your dog to out, and praise and reward when she does. Before she can regrab, put the toy behind your back or sit on it.
2. Wait several seconds. If she looks a bit puzzled, this is excellent. Say "Okay, get it!" and repeat the procedure.
3. If she happens to grab the toy without your invitation, in spite of your efforts to keep the toy under wraps between rounds, simply say "Too bad" and walk away.

   Push to the next exercise when you have done two tug sessions like this on two different days, and with at least five instances of you preceding the game with "Okay, get it" in each session.

Tug III: "Okay, Get It!" Enforced

1. Set this up exactly as you have until now, with the toy hidden. Say "Leave it," and then slowly start bringing the toy out. If your dog makes a move to grab it, put it away immediately. Wait until she calms down and then try again. The rule now is you won't say "Okay, get it!" until she does a *Leave It* first.
2. If at any point the dog is too quick or sneaky and grabs the toy, instantly say "Too bad," and apply a thirty-second penalty. Walk away in a huff, get the toy back (or get a different toy), and then return at the end of the thirty seconds. Repeat this procedure whenever she does this. Try to bring the toy out slowly enough that you have the advantage and can get it out of range if she moves for it. Think Dirty Harry: you're in hair-trigger mode—the toy is gone if she *flinches*.
3. Do several rounds and then quit. Some dogs—the really keen ones and the ones who have not had the impulse-control exercises in the second section of the book—take two or three sessions to start leaving the toy, or to do so with any regularity.

   Push to the next exercise when your dog has waited for the "Okay, get it!" cue five times in a row, in spite of the toy within reach.

Tug IV: Proofing Jaw Control

The final piece to having a well-trained tugger is emphasizing to your dog that she must be very careful, even in midgame, about where she places her jaws.

1. Play a couple of rounds of Tug, rehearsing your *out* and *Okay, Get It!* rules. You probably don't need food rewards at this point, as the reinitiation of the game is itself now the driving reward, and the cancellation of the game the incentive not to make errors.

2. From now on, if ever your dog nips your hand or clothing, however slightly, while grabbing or grip-adjusting, say "OUCH!" even if it didn't hurt, then "Too bad" and abruptly stop. Give her a thirty-second penalty, and then try again.

3. Have no mercy—if you fudge this rule ("Well, that one was my fault…") you'll limp along with tooth contact here and there. Strict is better here. You can even play devil's advocate by "feeding" her your hand. Before a regrab, hold onto most of the toy so there is much less for her to grab. Another proofing maneuver is to inch your hands down the object in midtug so your hands are closer and closer to the dog's end. There is no question this is setting her up to fail, but in the area of dog jaws on human flesh—an area with frequent death penalties for dogs—strongly proofing the dog like this is, I think, wise.

   When two complete Tug sessions have gone by with no boo-boos, your rules are installed. You may now play Tug as you wish. Remember to insert obedience and tricks into the breaks between rounds—this is a motivator not to waste!

   If your dog actually injures you when she makes a mistake, don't play this game.

Teaching *I'm Gonna Get You!* Using Your Dog's Own Toys

So far we have gotten the dog focused on her own toys by auditioning different kinds, and then supplying her with chewies that she likes, and if she enjoys Tug, instilling rules so you can use this valuable energy outlet that also adds value to her toys. There is one more thing we can do to reduce naughty object-grabbing in the house, which is to teach your dog that picking up forbidden items no longer works to get you to chase her, but picking up her own toys at certain times does.

We humans have a tendency to ignore dogs when they're being good. Your dog may even have picked up one of her own toys, hoping you might play chase

with her. But we don't attend to dogs when they pick up their own toys, do we? We attend to dogs when they pick up something of ours. From the dog's perspective, it works, and so she repeats it. If your dog loves being chased around, you may recognize the pattern now.

It's important to understand that your dog is not deliberately trying to do something wrong. She couldn't, as she has no concept of the value of any artifact besides its nutritional, toy, or button value. *Button value* means when a dog touches a certain thing, it's like pressing a button that makes the owner instantly pay attention. If your dog finds chase games fabulously rewarding, even if you're stern and nasty when you finally catch her, it may still be worth it to her. And, of course there's no need to get violent. You'd call child services if someone beat a two-year-old child for picking up your eyeglasses case. By a similar token, it's way out of proportion to get violent with some poor dog because she innocently picks up an object.

I'm Gonna Get You!

1. Choose a time when your dog seems to be in a playful mood. (If your dog is very toy oriented and has a long history of making you crazy running around with your possessions, pretty much any time will do.) It's ideal to use a new toy, like a stuffed animal or plush squeaky. If she has a favorite, this will also do nicely.

2. Sit down on the floor or a chair with this toy behind your back. Call your dog over and give her a brief, tantalizing flash of the toy. Pull it out, move it around enticingly, and then hide it again. This should pique her interest. Do it once or twice more. Then get up and run around the house a bit, flaunting the toy above your head, as though playing tag and your dog was "it."

3. Stop, tease her with the toy one more time, and then drop it. If she picks it up, immediately wiggle your fingers in a playful menacing manner and say "Iiiiiiii'mmmmm gonna GET you!" and then hop forward reaching for the toy. If she doesn't run away, try a light, wiggly jab at her rear quarters. If she runs, immediately give chase, squealing and saying "I'm gonna get you, get you, get you!!!"

4. If she doesn't pick up the toy but seems interested and excited, try slowly reaching for the toy: "Oooooh, I think this is myyyyyy toy . . ." and see if she takes the bait. If she grabs it, chase her gleefully.

5. If your dog knows the Tug rules, you can throw some Tug in at the end of the chase. This is a fun workout for both of you. Always say "I'm gonna get you!" before starting to chase. This helps with the compartmentalization we are trying to achieve.

Some dogs don't catch on right away, but it's worth persevering if you think your dog might enjoy this game. Encourage any little sparks of interest you see. You already know she's a good prospect for this game if she has a history of running around with your stuff.

MANAGEMENT DURING TRAINING

While you are trying to get the I'm-Gonna-Get-You game up and running, it's a good idea to keep the forbidden items your dog has grabbed in the past well out of reach. This is especially true if they are valuable. Things that you can't afford to have her spit on or chew will compel you to show great interest when she picks them up, chase her around, and perpetuate the whole vicious cycle. This prevention of a problem behavior through careful environmental control is called *management* by dog trainers.

Killing Interest in Forbidden Things

If your dog is a stealer, be sure to instill the I'm-Gonna-Get-You game before doing the following. It is important your dog have some outlet for this kind of energy. It's not good enough to just snuff out a behavior without instilling a substitute.

1. You will need to plant a previously stolen object for this exercise. Make very sure it's one you don't consider valuable, because if your dog grabs it, you're not going to chase her.

2. Plant this item in a spot where your dog might normally find it, and go about your business.

3. If she ignores it for a good ten minutes or more, bring out the I'm-Gonna-Get-You toy and play a round with her. She has been very good indeed.

4. If she approaches the item, say "Leave it." If she leaves it alone, praise warmly. If she picks up the item, do absolutely nothing. Don't even look in her direction (watch if you like but out of the corner of your eye).

5. If she settles down to chew it, distract her away from it. Walk toward the door, run out of the room, anything that will get her off it *but without approaching her*, which is the rewarding part. We do not want to keep rewarding this behavior.

6. Once you've got her well away from the item, prompt her into a room or her crate and close the door. Then collect the item. Don't risk another grab.

7. Repeat the procedure but with an item your dog will not chew. Station yourself closer as well, to add a bit more weight to your *Leave It.* If she's naughty and grabs, once again don't chase. There mustn't be any reward for grabbing. The big reward is your attention, positive or negative. We want to starve this behavior into what is called *extinction.* Do at least one a day.

Alternate this exercise with rounds of I'm Gonna Get You! to really underscore which items—her toys—have button value. Grabbing her own toys when you give the "I'm-Gonna-Get-You" cue immediately makes you chase her, whereas your possessions are useless in this regard.

Push to the next level, relaxing the management, when your dog hasn't even tried grabbing a forbidden item in one of your set-ups for five days in a row.

Loosening Up the Management

Now that you've met your dog's needs with regard to toys, attention, and chewing, you can start bringing *Leave It* into real-life situations. Gradually return the previously problematic items to their usual spots. In spite of *Leave It* and the keep-away game that you have installed, these items still have some history of reward, so it's very possible she'll attempt to grab one. So for the first twenty minutes or so that you put a really "hot" item back into its place, don't go too far. The earlier you can time your *Leave It,* the better the chance of success. It's also a good idea to play a round or two of I'm Gonna Get You! with her toy right after putting one of your possessions in place.

If your dog is a persistent grabber, I recommend you use timeout consequences alternating with what's called *interrupt-redirect.* It looks like this:

Scenario Number	Her Behavior	Your Response
One	She grabs your cell phone and lies down to chew on it.	Interrupt-redirect "Leave it" (you vow to get your cue in *before* she grabs next time).
One (cont)	She stops chewing the phone.	"Thank you! So good!" You collect the phone. "Where's Mr. Squeaky Iguana?"
Two	She enters the laundry room—you suspect a sock naughtiness agenda. Luckily you see it early.	Timeout consequence You block the laundry room door so she can't exit. "Too bad." You remove the sock, the rest of the laundry, and give her a minute in the laundry room, door closed.
Three	She heads for the laundry room again.	Interrupt-redirect "Leave it . . . where's Mr. Squeaky . . ."
Three (cont)	She bolts in and grabs a sock anyway, exiting gleefully and running around.	You go get Mr. Squeaky Iguana and place him next to where you're working, paying him lavish attention and ignoring the dog. Later, you rig up a drag line (a ten-foot leash to be worn in the house) on the dog for next time.
Four	She heads for the laundry room again.	Timeout consequence "Too bad." You calmly reel her in from the end of her line, remove the sock, and give her a one-minute timeout. Later that day you play keep away with Mr. Squeaky Iguana.
Five	She heads for the laundry room.	Interrupt-redirect (still on drag line) "Leave it."
Five (cont)	She stops, turns, and looks at you contritely.	"Thank you! So good, so good!" You close the door to the laundry room to prevent temptation for a little while and when she has settled down, you initiate a round of I'm Gonna Get You! with Mr. Squeaky Iguana. To have done so immediately after the attempted sock grab might have rewarded this behavior, so we need a lag in between.

Using both techniques gives your dog a lot of information: she learns about what happens if she grabs forbidden items, if she ignores a *Leave It,* and when she heeds the *Leave It* cue. Most of all, she learns a perfectly good alternative: regular games with Mr. Squeaky Iguana. Rounds of this are the key to the success of the whole enterprise.

If you had a child who kept making a mess by building things out of lamps, dishes, stock prospectuses, tied together with your phone jack cable, you could beat him for it or you could get him some Legos, clay, or other crafts toys. I am often dismayed at how dog owners take a *suppress the behavior* approach when a *channel the behavior* approach is much more elegant and humane. What do we get dogs for if not to have some dog behavior! It's like having *Animal Planet* right in your own home, provided you direct the behavior toward appropriate outlets.

BEGGING AND ATTENTION SEEKING

It is normal for dogs to want us to pat them, pay attention to them, and give them samples of our meals. The problem is not that the dog likes these things, the problem is that she attempts to gain them in ways we don't like. Once again, it's about outlets and vowing to break the habit of attending to the dog mostly when she's doing something we don't like. Let's look at applying what a dog has learned to these situations.

Intrusive Attention Seeking

1. As soon as your dog starts nose prodding or pawing you or a guest, cue her to *Down.* This is a new context so she may need a hand signal, which is fine. Once she lies down, praise her warmly and pat her a few times. If she stays down, pat her now and again.

2. The first time she breaks the *Down*—she may do so between pats—simply cue her down again with a verbal and/or hand signal. Praise and pat intermittently again.

3. The second time she breaks, say "Too bad" and escort her out of the area. You can put her behind a locked door, behind a child-proof gate, or in her crate. After a minute, let her rejoin the activity. Same rules. Alternate between giving her praise and pats for staying in *Down* position, and new consequences for failing to do so, which is banishment. Over time she'll get the picture.

> ## *What If She Barks on Timeout?*
>
> Timeouts draw their effectiveness from the pointed removal of exactly what the dog is after at that second. They are therefore, by definition, frustrating. Dogs often bark in response to frustration, and owners often crack when dogs bark, attending to them or ending the timeout in order to stop the noise. By now you can see that this is rewarding the barking. If your dog barks when on a timeout, the very best course of action is to wait until she has been quiet for a good fifteen seconds or so before you let her out, even if she has fulfilled the official penalty of thirty seconds or one minute. If you are getting pressure from other family members or neighbors about the noise, it's well worth your while to explain to them that you are diligently training your dog and that part of this entails your dog trying out barking as a strategy and failing. I've often given a nice homemade pie or other thoughtful gift, along with a card apologizing for the disruption and an explanation about what's going on, to neighbors who must put up with the barking of a client's dog while that dog is being made a better neighbor.

Begging for Food

1. As soon as your dog presents herself with pleading eyes, drooling mouth, and perhaps a paw on your lap when you are eating, ask her to lie down (or go to her mat or crate, which is covered in the tricks section).

2. If she lies down, praise her. It is entirely optional whether you also reward her with the occasional tidbit from your plate for holding a *Down* throughout the meal. Some people are perfectly comfortable doing this, and it is by far the most potent way to reward and thus strengthen the habit of lying down while people are eating. But if you don't want to, also fine.

3. If she doesn't lie down for either a verbal or a hand signal, banish her.

4. If she lies down but pops up, cue *Down* again and praise more often ("Thank you for staying down, so good!" "Oh, wow, you're *still* down, how clever, here's a little something…"). Try to time your praising and rewarding to coincide with longer stretches of being down. Avoid the trap of only remembering to praise and reward after your dog pops up and you cue her back down. This not only rewards her lying back down but the popping up!

5. This will take several meals to perfect. If you are using the mat option, and the mat is not next to the table, unless you are a good throw, you'll have to get up for the first couple of meals and pay her for staying. This legwork is well worth it, however, to have a polite dog throughout the rest of her years with you.

Chapter 11

Consolidation and Maintenance

Once you have done basic instillation on any command, have discrimination up to the standard you like, and have proofed these basics in some varied contexts, the next step is to start integrating your training into everyday life to make sure your dog doesn't get rusty. (See chapters 7 and 8 to review discrimination and proofing behaviors in various locations and contexts.) Now is the time to start using those valuable but clunkier rewards listed below because you'll be asking your dog to obey a command once rather than doing many repetitions in a row. And, even if you were satisfied to continue using food or toys as a reward, it's actually advisable to use additional rewards for the behaviors connected to things or activities that happen day to day. You get very cheap daily practice and proofing, and ultimately stronger behavior, because you have *diversified your motivator base*.

EVERYDAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR BEHAVIOR MAINTENANCE

Here are some exercises and rewards that will consolidate and maintain your training. You may think of others to add that are particular to your dog.

Door-Opening Services

Only you have the power to open doors, which makes it a great opportunity for obedience practice, such as *Wait, Sit, Down*, or a recall away from the door. When exiting to walk your dog or whenever he asks to go out or come back in from the yard, get him to do one of his commands before you open the door. Once he completes the command, praise him, tell him to wait, open the door, and if he does his wait, let him out the door. This is a fair amount of bang for

your buck, obedience-wise, but getting outdoors is a powerful reward and so a very exploitable resource. If you crate your dog, you can have him give you a *Sit* or *Down* before letting him out.

Walkies

Once you've made your dog do something to get you to open the front door, ask him to do something else before you start the actual walk.

Good Smells

If your dog starts straining on his leash to smell some bush, pole, or patch of grass, don't let him at it until he does one of his commands—the same goes for meeting and greeting other dogs if he enjoys this.

Games

Before throwing a fetch toy or initiating a round of *Tug*, practice a bit of obedience. If your dog isn't at all keen for games, skip this one.

Din-din

This is a splendid opportunity to practice *Sit-Stay* or *Down-Stay*—ask your dog to stay and lower the bowl full of food slowly. If he moves, raise the bowl and start over. Only put it on the floor and let him eat if he does a perfect stay for you.

Attention and/or Tummy Rub Services

This is another hit-or-miss suggestion. Some dogs love attention like patting and scratching, some are indifferent, and some seem to actually find it irritating. If your dog is in the first group, it's an exploitable motivator.

Dog Park Recall (Off-Leash Exercise)

If your dog goes to a dog park or off-leash area, the moment when you unclip the leash is hugely rewarding. You can therefore safely ask for several behaviors before granting the

Dog Park Recall

freedom time. I especially like practicing recalls away from the gate to the dog park—this is expensive behavior but the reward will make it worth his while, so don't compromise.

Getting in the Maintenance Habit: One Piece at a Time

In the course of everyday life, especially in the fast-paced world of most families, it's hard to remember to practice a bit of training at opportune moments. The best way to get in the habit is to work on one scenario at a time. Rather than trying to remember to ask for *Sits* and *Downs* and *Stays* in all or many of the above contexts, choose one and make it your project for a week or two. Here's an example:

> For the next two weeks, my dog must do a:
>
> **5-second wait**
>
> before every:
>
> **meal**

At the end of two weeks, when the behavior is second nature, add another one, such as:

> For the next two weeks, my dog must do a:
>
> **sit and a down**
>
> before every:
>
> **door opening service in OR out of the yard**

And then:

> For the next two weeks, my dog must do a:
>
> ## Loose Leash approach
>
> before every:
>
> ### chance to sniff that tree on the corner of the street

When you first practice these, remember, your dog's obedience will likely fall apart. It's extremely important that you "put your money where your mouth is" and refuse to grant the activity until the dog does the behavior you've asked for.

Once you've got an obedience practice habit for your dog's daily reward activities, it's time to reward yourself for amazing work. This habit will benefit every dog you own for the rest of your life, as well as those of your kids, if they participate in the project.

PART FOUR

Advanced Behaviors

In this section are instructions for installing the following behaviors:

- Heeling
- Go to Mat
- Retrieve
- Sit Pretty
- Roll Over

If you work on these behaviors, you'll reap a number of benefits:

- Your training skills will get sharper.
- Your dog will learn some useful and fun behaviors.
- You and your dog will bond all the more strongly for going on this journey into more complicated training.
- You'll learn how to use a clicker properly.
- Your mental template for how training works will be such that should you wish to install a behavior not mentioned in this book, you will be able to do so. In other words, your brain cannot help but assimilate the common denominators in these training recipes. You will now have an adequate understanding of the *principles* of effective animal training to train solo from the ground up.

You can train these advanced behaviors in any order, train some and not others, or train a behavior partway—it is completely your choice. The more you train, of course, the more of the above benefits will be yours.

Chapter 12

Heeling

Heeling is defined as a dog walking closely by your side, turning with you, adjusting her pace to yours to remain in position. Before starting to train this behavior, decide which side you want your dog to heel on. In American Kennel Club obedience trials, dogs are required to heel on the left side of the handler, but if you have no such aspirations, you can heel your dog on whatever side you like, as long as you standardize it.

TRAINING HEELING

Heeling is not only a complex behavior for a dog to learn, it is mechanically tricky for new trainers. I recommend you practice the mechanics of luring, delivering, and counting steps without a dog before starting to train.

Heeling I: Mechanics (Practice without Your Dog)

The heeling method you'll be using employs prompt *dropping,* which is different from the *prompt fading* (gradually eliminating the prompt) we used when instilling *Sit* and *Down.* The first mechanical skill you will need is that of walking in a straight line with a food target held at your dog's nose level at your side, near your pant seam. You can hold the target in either hand, as long as you keep it glued to your pant seam at your dog's nose height. Try different combinations (target on left side, held by left hand; target on left side held by right hand brought across your body, and so on) to see which feels the most comfortable. Watch the DVD segment a couple of times, and then practice without your dog.

Some people can easily load their hand with the five treats that will make up a set, dispensing on the fourth *beat* or *pace* like a Pez machine, and then carrying on. (I'll explain what I mean by *beat* or *pace* presently; just stay with me here.) Others prefer to stash all but one treat in their other hand, luring with one treat at a time and reloading each time they pay the dog. Experiment

with both. You may change your mind once you start working with your dog, but it's still well worth your while to consider this problem up front.

You will be walking a certain number of *paces* with the dog's nose on the food target, delivering, and then carrying on. Each delivery is one repetition. As usual, we're going to Push for five out of five correct repetitions (*correct* being defined as the dog was right in position for the duration), Stick on three or four out of five, and Drop on two or fewer.

For this method of heeling, it's fantastically useful for you to think or say out loud, in rhythm, the pattern of walking and paying. People who have been on drill teams or in marching bands will be familiar with this. Get in the habit of walking briskly. Believe it or not, slow walking doesn't help the cause. Really stride out as though marching.

Let's look at the first pattern, which is three paces of luring, paying on the fourth. Walk in a rhythm, reciting as follows:

"Lure, lure, lure, pay, lure, lure, lure, pay," and so on.

Some people, such as ex-marching band members, may prefer to keep count in *beats*: "One, two, three, pay, one, two three, pay."

For now, because there is no dog and you don't have to decide whether or not to pay on the fourth beat, you will automatically dispense the food, dropping it onto the floor. This simplifies what is already a mechanically tricky task: walking in a straight line, counting, keeping your food lure right against your pant seam, and paying on the fourth count.

When you think you have the hang of it, pick up the food you've been dropping and get your dog.

Heeling II: First Round with the Dog

Now that you have your dog with you, there are two differences from what you did in *Heeling I:*

- During the first three paces, you'll have to gauge whether the dog is in good enough position or not. For the first set, be a bit lenient, as the feeding for position goes a long way here. It's good nevertheless to hone your observation skills: is she following or not? Dispense on the fourth beat only if she has made the grade on the first three.

- Once you dispense, the dog will consume the reward, which means she might stop to chew. The use of very small and very soft treats makes this less likely, so I highly recommend that you use rewards with as little chew factor as possible. It's absolutely possible to teach fine heeling to dogs who can't walk and chew (or even walk and swallow) at the

same time, but it's easier on the trainer if the walking rhythm isn't constantly broken up by chewing. As your dog gets more advanced and the rewards become fewer and farther between, it'll be much smoother. Also, some dogs have a lot of chew factor initially but with practice actually *learn* to chew and walk. There are some dog mechanics, too!

Here are the first three stages of teaching the heeling behavior:

Heeling II with Prompt			
Stages	Dog's Task—to Be Rewarded, She Must . . .	Trainer Mechanics Notes	Push-Drop-Stick Notes
1	Follow loosely at your side for four paces (paid on the fourth). If her position is a bit sloppy or she seems a bit confused, don't worry—pay any facsimile, as long as she *collects* in position.	"One, two, three, pay" (pause for chewing) "One, two," etc. Feed for position—keep your hand glued to your pant seam and dispense there.	Automatic Push unless zero following—in which case, Stick.
2	Follow closely at your side the entire four paces. You should see her eager face near the lure for the entire four beats.	The same except skip the feed if she's not right there. Don't forget to feed for position. Keep track of how many feeds now for Push-Drop-Stick purposes.	Can Drop to stage one or split to "one, two, pay" if she gets zero to two correct.
3	Follow closely at your side for five paces (paid on the fifth).	"One, two, three, four, pay," etc.	I suggest two sets here—Push on ten for ten.

Heeling III: Prompt Removal

Once again, I suggest that you practice this maneuver without the dog. It's a brand-new wrinkle in what is already, as you have seen, a complex task. The new bit is that you will remove the food target for one beat, the beat right before you pay. Watch the video example several times and then practice.

Turn up the sound and march along. The first level consists of three lured paces, one removal pace, and then payment. So the pattern looks like this:

Lure, lure, lure, remove, pay, lure, lure, lure, remove, pay, etc.

If you keep count, it is: "One, two, three, remove, pay, one, two, three, remove, pay," etc.

This dropping of the prompt immediately before paying teaches the dog something very, very impor-

tant: whenever that food lure disappears, it means she is about to be paid. It's important to remove the lure for only one beat (even a half beat, if you can manage it) so that the dog keeps heeling on momentum. It's almost as though you're paying just as she starts to notice it's gone. She doesn't have enough beats to slow down (which would be bad for the cause, as you would be rewarding her for being out of position). You will get a lot of bang for your Pavlov's Dog buck, however, as dogs are extremely good at learning these kinds of patterns.

When you've practiced to the point where it feels second nature, don't get the dog just yet. Practice the subsequent few steps so that when the dog comes, you'll be able to flow nicely from one to the other with minimal mechanical fumbling.

Heeling III: Dropping the Prompt	
Stages	**Your Mechanics—Practice without the Dog**
4	"One, two, three, remove, pay . . . one, two, three, remove, pay," etc.
5	"One, two, three, four, remove, pay . . . one, two, three, four, remove, pay," etc.
6	"One, two, three, four, remove, remove, pay," etc. Two beats of removal now.
7	"One, two, three, four, remove, remove, remove, pay," etc.
8	"One, two, three, remove, remove, remove, remove, pay," etc.

Adding Praise

On the removal beats, it helps to praise the dog to prop up her heeling for these first few rounds of target removal. A high-pitched, enthusiastic voice usually works best. Some men have difficulty making high-pitched sounds, either physically or in principle. If this sounds like you, you'll need to find a style of

praise that rolls easily off your tongue and that urges your dog to stay with you those first few critical times you remove the target. Baby-talk voice, lovey-dovey voice, pep-talking-the-pitcher voice, and "attaboy" whispers are all very effective for most dogs. So here's our last practice round. Every time you see praise, you simultaneously remove, as you did before, while you praise. Practice the same steps without the dog but with the addition of the praise:

Heeling with Praise and Prompt Removal	
Stages	**Your Mechanics Plus Praise—Practice without the Dog**
4	"One, two, three, PRAISE, pay . . . one, two, three, PRAISE, pay," etc.
5	"One, two, three, four, PRAISE, pay . . . one, two, three, four, PRAISE, pay," etc.
6	"One, two, three, four, PRAISE, PRAISE, pay," etc. Two beats of removal now.
7	"One, two, three, four, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE, pay," etc.
8	"One, two, three, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE, pay," etc.

Now get your dog for the following sequence. Notice that stage 4 is now divided into two parts: an automatic pay after the removal and a contingent pay after the removal. You will do ten trials where the dog will be fed in position regardless of what she does on the removal, and then a regular set of five trials where you will only feed if the dog maintains position on the removal step.

Stages	Dog's Task—to Be Rewarded, She Must . . .	Trainer Mechanics Notes	Push-Drop-Stick Notes
4.1	Stay in position during the lured steps. For now, feed after the removal no matter what. The Pavlov's Dog part is more important than her position during removal on this first round.	"One, two, three, PRAISE, pay." Walk briskly, especially on the removal—fight the temptation to slow down to "help" (it doesn't help). Feed for position, preferably while moving (try not to stop or go back to the dog to pay).	Do two sets (ten trials total), then an automatic Push.

(continued)

Stages	Dog's Task—to Be Rewarded, She Must . . .	Trainer Mechanics Notes	Push-Drop-Stick Notes
4.2	Stay in position during all steps, including the removal step.	"One, two, three, PRAISE, pay." Walk briskly, especially on the removal—fight the temptation to slow down to "help" (it doesn't help). Feed for position, preferably while moving (try not to stop or go back to the dog to pay).	Drop to 4.1 if her position is not stellar on the removal step—this is not the time to be pushy.
5	Stay in position during all steps, including the removal step.	"One, two, three, four, PRAISE, pay." Walk briskly. Feed for position.	*Push on five for five.*
6	Stay in position during all steps, including the removal step.	"One, two, three, four, PRAISE, PRAISE, pay." Walk briskly. Feed for position.	*Push on five for five.*
7	Stay in position during all steps, including the removal step.	"One, two, three, four, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE, pay." Walk briskly. Feed for position.	*Push on five for five.*
8	Stay in position during all steps, including the removal step.	"One, two, three, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE, pay." Walk briskly. Feed for position.	*Push on five for five.*

Chapter 13

Mat Training

This is an enjoyable exercise to train and will dovetail nicely with your dog's *Down-Stay*. The end result will be a dog who on your cue goes over to his mat, lies down, and stays there.

There are two main benefits. The first is the inculcation in the trainer of principles involved in developing a *remote* (i.e. *work away from the trainer*) behavior and transfer of the cue from the mat itself to a verbal. The second is that, once the targeting is instilled, you can send your dog to his bed without having to get up yourself.

It's important to put the mat down only when you're training because very soon into the process it will become a prompt for the behavior (known in the training business as a *prop cue*). If the mat were always down, the training would proceed in a one-step-forward, two-steps-back fashion: the behavior would be strengthened when you were training, and then weakened when the dog targeted and lay down on the

> ## *Putting the Mat Away*
>
> Don't forget to remove the mat at the end of every training session. Later on, when an official cue, "Go to bed, please," is added, we'll exploit the mat as a prompt. And finally, when this cue is well learned, you can leave the mat down. But not just yet.

mat between sessions. For this reason, between training sessions, put it away. The goal is to develop a strong association between the mat and this exercise, and this association would be weakened if the mat were to remain down. Only in the final stages does the mat stay down all the time. For this reason, I recommend you use a mat (a towel will do) rather than your dog's usual bed, which should be available to him all the time. At the completion of training, you can combine the training with your dog's bed in a couple of easy steps. Until then, use a training mat.

The Down on Mat exercise requires a completed *Down-Stay*.

DOWN ON MAT

The terminal behavior, our goal at the completion of training, is that on your verbal cue the dog will go to his mat, lie down on it, and stay there. As with all training, we begin with a version of the behavior your dog can do right now.

Down on Mat I

1. Put your mat down in a location that will serve as a nice spot to send your dog to when you would like him to lie down.

2. The mat is a new thing, so your dog might investigate it the first time you put it down. This is a valuable first impression opportunity, so let's do a little Pavlov. As soon as your dog checks it out, praise him warmly and feed him an entire handful of treats right on the surface.

3. Lure your dog onto the mat and feed as soon as all four paws are on.

4. Give your hand signal for *Down.* (I recommend not attempting a verbal "down" just yet, as it's possible the newness of the surface may temporarily wobble his response.)

5. Pay him in a down position on the mat as soon as he lies down.

6. Prompt him off the mat with happy talk so you can try it again.

Push on five for five.

Don't forget to put the mat away when you finish the session.

Down on Mat II

1. Using the same mat (or bed) in the same location, prompt your dog onto it using a hand signal (no food lure). As soon as all four paws are on, pay from your other hand, which is behind your back, or from your store of treats in a pocket or pouch.

2. Say "Down" and wait one or two seconds. If he lies down on the mat, praise lavishly and feed for position (treat placed on mat's surface while dog lies down).

3. If he doesn't lie down, use a hand signal. Pay, feeding for position even though he didn't do the verbal. It's not time to be strict yet. The mat is still too new.

4. Prompt him off the mat with happy talk and repeat until you're five for five.

Push on five for five.

Don't forget to put the mat away when you finish the session.

Down on Mat III

1. Signal your dog onto the mat, paying him as soon as he's on.
2. Say "Down" and wait two seconds. If he lies down, praise lavishly and pay right away, putting the treat on the mat's surface so he eats in a down right off the mat. Prompt him off the mat and repeat until you're five for five.
3. If he doesn't lie down, after two seconds say "Too bad" and walk away. Wait until he spontaneously gets off the mat and try again.

   Push on five for five.

   Don't worry if you have to Drop to *Down on Mat II*—some dogs need an extra round of hand signals. You can also split to a smaller hand signal.

Down on Mat IV

1. Signal your dog onto the mat. This time, praise for putting all four paws on it, but don't pay. Instead, go right into the *Down* part.
2. Say "Down" and give him two seconds to do it. If he does, praise and pay immediately, feeding for position as usual.
3. If he doesn't lie down, after two seconds say "Too bad" and walk away. Wait until he spontaneously gets off the mat and try again.

   Push on five for five.

Down on Mat V

1. Place your mat in such a way that you can perform a walk-around *Stay* around it. Then signal your dog onto the mat with a hand signal and praise when he has four paws on.
2. Say "Down" and pay when he lies down, feeding for position.

3. Immediately do a double walk-around *Stay*, one clockwise and one counterclockwise circle. Keep your eyes on your dog so your timing of "Too bad" will be perfect if you see him start to break his down position.

4. If he stays, pay him at the end, in position. If he moves, say "Too bad," reposition him in a down, and try again.

5. Prompt him off the mat and practice until you have a set of five completed.

Push on five for five.

If your dog breaks three times, split to a single-direction walk-around.

Down on Mat VI

1. With your mat still placed to allow your walk-around, signal your dog onto it, praise when he's on, and then say "Down." Praise the *Down*, but rather than paying this time, immediately commence your walk-around *Stay*.

2. If he stays, pay him at the end and do another double walk-around. If he breaks, say "Too bad," put him back in his down, and commence the next trial.

3. Do the walk-around *Stay* trials, paying each correct one without prompting him off the mat each time. At the end of the set of five, prompt him off the mat. What this means is that he'll do five stays but actually lie down only once, at the very beginning.

Push on five for five.

Down on Mat VII

1. Signal your dog onto the mat and say "Down," praising when he does.

2. Keeping an eye on him over your shoulder, do a five-pace bungee *Stay*. As soon as you're five paces away from him, snap right back to pay him if he holds the *Stay*.

3. Be sure to feed for position—right on the mat with your dog still in his down.

4. Keep your eye on the dog. If he breaks, say "Too bad" right away to achieve that valuable cause-and-effect timing.

Push on five for five.

Down on Mat VIII

1. Signal your dog onto the mat and say "Down," praising when he does.

2. Go out to five paces, and then count to ten seconds. If he stays, return to him, praise, and feed for position.

3. If he breaks, say "Too bad" immediately and try again.

Push on five for five.

Down on Mat IX

1. Signal your dog onto the mat and say "Down," praising when he does.

2. Keeping an eye on him as long as you can, pop out of the room for one second, just long enough to disappear from his view, and then immediately reappear.

3. If he breaks, say "Too bad" and reposition him in his down on the mat and try again. Many dogs will get up to follow you, so don't be alarmed. Focus on your timing, on getting your "Too bad" tacked as closely as possible onto his decision to break out of his *Down-Stay*.

4. If he stays, return to him, praise—he has done a glorious thing—and pay, feeding for position.

Push on five for five.

If you need a split, go to the doorway of the room without leaving and lean out without actually disappearing. Don't be discouraged—it is expensive for some dogs to lose sight of you and it's worth slowing down to get over this hump.

Why Suddenly No Cue to Down?

One great advantage of this exercise is how it helps the trainer—you—think about the sometimes slippery concept of cues, that is, what exactly tells your dog to do a certain behavior right now? We humans are so verbal that we often forget an important truth about the way a dog learns: *anything* can be a cue for him to do a *Down-Stay*, including a prior command, such as being asked to go to his mat. In other words, when this is fully trained, the *Down* and *Stay* parts will be automatic. Animal trainers call a sequence such as going from anywhere in the house, finding the mat, lying down on it, and staying until further notice a *behavior chain.* It would be much less

convenient for you to have to signal your dog through every step of this chain, so you must train it in such a way that it'll all roll out smoothly on your single cue of "Go to bed, please." The most efficient training order to achieve this is the one you're using:

1. Intimately associate the mat with a *Down-Stay*.
2. Fade the existing *Down* cues (verbal "down" and hand signal for *Down*) until the mat itself functions as a down cue.
3. Add distance so that the dog targets the mat and auto-downs.
4. Put the distance targeting and the *Stay* together.
5. Add a new verbal cue to trigger the whole chain, and teach the dog to perform the chain only on this verbal cue. Once this is accomplished, the mat can stay down between training sessions, as the verbal cue has taken over the task of signaling the dog that it's time to do the behavior.

Down on Mat X

1. Signal your dog onto the mat and wait five seconds. If he lies down on his own, praise and pay him immediately, feeding for position.

2. If, after five seconds, he's still standing there, has sat, or has drifted off the mat, get him back on if necessary, and give him a very tiny *Down* hand signal. As soon as lies down, pay immediately, even though you had to help out.

3. Prompt him off the mat and repeat.

4. Notice that we are back-burnering the *Stay* for now in order to focus on the automatic *Down*.

   Push on five for five—both automatic *Downs* and those requiring tiny hand signals count as correct for this exercise.

Down on Mat XI

1. Stand next to the mat, exactly where you have been standing up until now, and wait five seconds to see if your dog will get on the mat by himself. If he gets on and lies down all by himself, praise and pay, feeding for position as always.

2. If he doesn't get on the mat or gets partway on, give him the smallest signal you can get away with to get him properly positioned. Wait another five seconds for him to lie down by himself. If he does, pay immediately.

3. If he doesn't lie down, say "Too bad" and walk away. Then try again. In this round, he's allowed a bit of help to get onto the mat, but he has to lie down by himself.

Push on five for five automatic *Downs*.

Down on Mat XII

1. Stand next to the mat and wait five seconds to see if your dog will get on and lie down. If he does, praise heartily and pay.
2. If he doesn't get on within the five-second limited hold, say "Too bad," and walk away. If he gets on but doesn't lie down on his own, do the same.
3. He has to get on the mat and lie down with your verbal cues or hand signals in order to be paid.

Push on five for five.

Pull the mat.

MAT TRAINING WITH THE CLICKER

For the rest of the training, you will be using a clicker. A *clicker* is a device that improves your timing. It allows you to signal with pinpoint accuracy the exact instant the dog does the action you are attempting to train. You haven't needed one up until now because you've been working right next to your dog and the time envelopes have not been too difficult. It also would have given you one more mechanical skill to juggle when you needed to focus all your attention on the other things you were doing. Now you're ready to bring your skills up to the next level.

Do I Have to Use a Clicker?

No, you absolutely don't have to. You can gain a comparable timing boost by using a special word as a substitute (or a visual signal if your dog is deaf). If you feel up to it, however, the clicker offers the advantages of being distinct, novel, and an especially crisp sound. If you follow the instructions exactly and stick to the rules, clickers raise your game.

Clicker Charging I

Clicker charging is an application of Pavlovian (Classical) Conditioning: teaching the dog that the sound of the click is a reliable predictor of reward. Its primary advantage is that of sharpening timing. It also allows us to signal a rewardable response at a distance and without being in the dog's line of sight.

1. Purchase a clicker, but *resist the temptation to click it* anywhere near your dog. Read all the instructions for this exercise first. Don't click until you're completely ready. I recommend the i-click style of clicker, which is quieter and faster than standard box-style clickers.
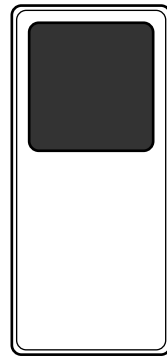
Box clicker

i-click

2. Get hold of an over-the-top treat, something way out of the ordinary in both type and quantity. I suggest a half bowlful of one of those roasted chickens you see under the lamps in supermarkets. Leave the skin on (but no bones). We want a lot of mileage out of this first conditioning trial.

3. Prep this bonanza so it's ready to hand to your dog, and then put it in the fridge. Wash your hands, put the clicker in your pocket, and then go about some sort of nondog business (work on your computer, watch TV), ignoring your dog.

4. When your dog least expects it, take the clicker out of your pocket and click it once. Wait two seconds. Then start the party: cheer as you head over to the fridge, remove the bonanza, and give it to your dog. Keep cheering until he's nearly done consuming. That's it.

5. Wait at least twenty-four hours and do the same thing one more time, but at a different time, during a different nondog activity, still when he seems to expect nothing. Be sure to do the bonanza prep well in advance so it's not a tip-off. The clicking sound is the only tip-off that the bonanza is on the way.

> ## *The Rules*
>
> - Always pay after clicking, even if you click accidentally.
> - Click once.
> - Click first, then pay. Don't even reach for a reward until after you have clicked.

Wait one week (no clicking) and then proceed to the next exercise.

Clicker Charging II

1. Get your clicker and a supply of your usual rewards.

2. Put your dog's mat down, stand next to it, and wait. This is a review *Down on Mat XII*. But now you will click before paying.

3. Click when he lies down on the mat. Then reach into your pouch, get a reward, and pay the dog in position. Be very fussy about this sequence:

   a. Watch for the behavior you're after—in this case, your dog completing the act of lying down on the mat.

   b. Keep your body still while you click—don't reach for the reward, praise at the same time, or point the clicker at the dog like a TV remote. Trainers call this a *quiet body*. I tell my students to *be a statue* when clicking.

   c. Feed for position *after* the click. The click buys you time, so start your reaching for rewards after you click.

4. Prompt him off the mat and repeat ten times, focusing on getting the vital click-then-reward sequence exactly right.

Wait at least twenty-four hours before pushing to Clicker Charging III.

Clicker Charging III

Pull up your mat for now in order to practice the following review. Because your dog is fluent at these behaviors, and you're fluent at cueing them, it'll allow you to focus on your clicking.

Behavior	When to Click	Priorities
Sit From a stand, verbal cue	The instant your dog's rear hits the floor	Keep a quiet body while you click, then pay.
Down From a sit, verbal cue	The instant your dog's elbows hit the floor	Focus on watching the elbows to time your click.
Walk-around Stay Both directions	Just as you're concluding the second direction	If your dog breaks, say "Too bad" and try again.
Leave It Treats and toys on floor	When you see your dog "decide" not to move	Be ready to cover the item if he is naughty and tries for it.
Premack Recall Dinner on the counter	As soon as your dog reaches you	After clicking, return to the counter and give him his dinner.
Heeling Four steps with no lure	Third step "One, two, click, pay"	Practice first without the dog to get your mechanics smooth.

MAT TARGETING

Your dog may already be what trainers call *mat-happy*, gleefully getting on the mat, lying down, and looking at you expectantly as soon as you put it down, as though saying, "Can we play the lie-down-on-mat game now, please?" This is fine for now. Later on, he'll learn that this behavior works only when you cue it. It's also okay if your dog isn't mat-happy. He soon will be.

Mat Targeting I

1. With rewards and clicker ready, put your mat down in its usual place.
2. Instead of standing right next to the mat, stand a foot away. Don't cheat: I really mean one foot—that is, twelve inches—not one pace or one yard. Less is more for the first few distance steps.
3. Wait ten seconds to see what your dog does. If he lies down on the mat, click. Wait a full second after the click, then pay, feeding for position (he consumes his reward on the mat in a down). If he breaks out of his down when you click, redown him for the reward. You're still paying for his original correct response, just obeying the feed-for-position rule.

Mat Targeting I-A

This is a split set for dogs who tend to target *you* rather than the mat. You need this split if on *Mat Targeting I* your dog lay down next to you and not right on the mat as before. It's worth being fussy about it now to avoid mat-targeting grief later.

   Notice that unlike most training exercises, this one alternates between two versions: an easy one (you right next to the mat) where he gets it right, and the more difficult one, where he is allowed to make the error but is then corrected.

1. Stand right next to the mat to guarantee accurate targeting. As soon as your dog lies down on the mat click, wait a second, and then pay, feeding for position.
2. Now stand one foot away and let him make the error of lying down next to you rather than accurately on the mat. As soon as he completes his down on the floor in the wrong spot, say "Too bad," and then immediately prompt him back up and onto the correct spot on the mat, using your voice and hands ("Ooh, ooh, over here, over here . . . down . . ."). Praise him warmly but don't feed. We are making him go through the expense of repositioning himself as penalty for his mistake.
3. Now give him an easy one—stand next to the mat and pay him for getting it right.
4. Now give him a chance to make the error—stand a foot away. Do as you did in Step 2.
5. Alternate five of each and then quit for the day so he can sleep on it.
6. If, on any of the difficult versions, he gets it right, click and pay, feeding for position. He might figure it out on the spot, or he might need a nap.

   Wait twenty-four hours and try Mat Targeting I *again.*

4. If he lies down but more next to *you* than on the mat, say "Too bad" and try again. If he makes the same mistake again, do the exercise *Mat Targeting I-A*, which is a split to improve his accuracy.

5. If he doesn't lie down at all (he stands there or sits), say "Too bad" and walk away. Wait a minute and then try again. If he still doesn't lie down, you need to Drop. Drop to *Down on Mat X*.

6. If he gets on the mat and lies down before you can even position yourself, don't worry about it. Move one foot away, wait one second, then click, and then reward him. The first trial often goes like this. It's actually a good sign.

Mat Targeting II

1. Put your mat down and stand two feet away. Until you attach the cue, on *Mat Targeting IX*, don't worry if your dog instantly lies down on the mat when you initially place it. Click and pay and then prompt him off for the next trial at the distance you're working on.

2. If he lies down on the mat, click, then pay, feeding for position.

3. Be fussy about his positioning on the mat. If he fudges in order to lie down a little closer to you, say "Too bad" and try again. Be prepared to Drop to *Mat Targeting I* or *I-A* to make your point.

Push on five for five.

Mat Targeting III

1. Put your mat down and stand three feet away.

2. If your dog lies down on the mat, click, then pay, feeding for position.

3. Be fussy about his positioning on the mat. If he fudges in order to lie down a little closer to you, say "Too bad" and try again. Be prepared to Drop if necessary. You can also do a split similar to *I-A*, where you alternate between one foot and three feet. You may have heard the term "trial-and-error learning." This is an example.

Push on five for five.

Mat Targeting IV

1. Put your mat down and stand four feet away.

2. If he lies down on the mat, click, then pay, feeding for position.

3. Don't tolerate any creeping. If he fudges in order to lie down a little closer to you, say "Too bad" and try again. Even if your dog has been perfect at targeting, you may have a *hump* at some point, where his targeting seems to fall apart. This is normal. Train through it, following the Push-Drop-Stick rules faithfully. Three "too bads" in a set means a two for three, which means you must Drop. Double Drops are not unusual in mat targeting.

Push on five for five.

Mat Targeting V

1. Repeat the exercise at five feet and then at ten feet.

2. As usual, your dog may jump the gun on the first trial, which you should still reward. And, as usual, only reward when your dog is completely on the mat. This exercise is clearer if you don't let him inch toward you even a little. The mat is the target, not you. This exercise for feeding for position—on the mat—really helps the cause.

3. Split as needed between five and ten feet. Some dogs can make that jump instantly, some need a split, and some need to go one foot at a time. This has nothing to do with your dog's intelligence or trainability, any more than someone's particular ability (or inability) at singing or judo reflects their overall intelligence.

Push on five for five.

Do *Mat Targeting VI* to *IX* if you want a moveable target. Go directly to *Mat Targeting X* if you don't.

Optional Steps VI—IX

If your mat is in the place you'd always like to send your dog to lie down, you can jump directly to *Mat Targeting X*. If you'd like your dog to be more flexible, here are four optional steps to teach him to target and lie down on the mat no matter where it is.

Why Not Move the Mat Only Slightly?

Interestingly, changing the location of the mat drastically, as in *Mat Targeting VI*, is a cleaner discrimination task for your dog than if you had moved it only slightly, say, one mat-length. The reintroduction of prompting on the first set as *scaffolding* for the new location will help him out. Then, if he makes the mistake of going to the old mat location rather than to the mat on *Mat Targeting VII*, your "too bad" followed by a Drop or split will be very valuable information indeed. I think many dogs relish the puzzle aspect. If your dog thought in words, he'd be thinking, "Hey, this behavior worked a minute ago. Now she's saying 'Too bad.' What's different? Wait! I get it—it's the *mat*, it's not the *place*!"

Mat Targeting VI

1. Place your mat at the other end of the room you've been working in and stand a foot away from it.
2. Using hand signals, prompt your dog onto the mat and into a *Down*.
3. Click, reward in position, and do four more. Go directly into *Mat Targeting VII*. This is not a good spot to end the session. If you must end now, in your next session repeat this exercise as a warm-up before pushing to *Mat Targeting VII*.

   Push on five for five.

Mat Targeting VII

1. Immediately on the heels of *Mat Targeting VI*, prompt your dog off the mat, leave the mat in its new spot, go ten feet away, and wait five seconds.
2. If your dog targets the mat and lies down, click and go in with a double reward.
3. If he follows you, does nothing, or lies down in the wrong place, say "Too bad" and leave the room. Then try again. Keep careful track of how many he gets right, as the Push-Drop-Stick regime is more complicated for this exercise:

   Push on five for five.

   Stick on three or four for five.

   Split on one or two for five.

   Drop on zero for five (and then also do the split set in the Splits box below).

Let's Talk Splits

If your dog gets one or two for five on *Mat Targeting VII*, I don't recommend a Drop because this is his second time doing the ten-foot distance (he did it on *Mat Targeting V*). He is no longer a beginner learner, and the split possibilities are fantastic. Let's look at the playing field by comparing the parameters on *Mat Targeting VI*, the last step he was successful (five for five) on, and *Mat Targeting VII*, the step he struggled with, then talk about splits.

Mat Targeting VI	Mat Targeting VII
The mat is in a new place.	The mat is in a new place.
You are right next to the mat.	You are ten feet away.
Hand signal to prompt your dog onto the mat	No prompt
Hand signal for *Down*	No hand signal or verbal cue for *Down*

Based on this information, a number of split possibilities are evident. The one thing we must keep constant is the mat in the new place, so let's focus on playing with the distance between you and the mat and the degree of prompting. The easiest possible hybrid exercise for your dog would be to retain your proximity to the mat, prompt him on with a signal but then see if he'll lie down on his own. The most difficult would be to keep the distance high as well as dispensing with all prompts. In the middle range would be a more modest distance—four or five feet—without prompts for the targeting or the *Down*. You can also try a mixed set, with one or two trials at each level, such as:

1. (Warm-up) Right next to mat, no prompting
2. Two feet from mat, no prompting
3. Five feet from mat, no prompting
4. Ten feet from mat, no prompting

I'd prefer you not to get in the habit of doing so few trials on a given step in training, but this is a case where it's appropriate.

Mat Targeting VIII

1. Put the mat down in a different room.

2. Think about your dog's performance on the previous exercise. Use it as a gauge to build a plan for the same exercise in this new room. Your goal is to get him to target the mat and lie down from a distance of ten feet. If he struggled with *Mat Targeting VII*, it would be wise to start off with you right next to the mat, prompting both the targeting and the *Down*. Then build.

3. Timing

Step	Prompt Targeting?	Prompt Down?	Distance
VIII—A			
VIII—B			
VIII—C			
VIII—D			

Mat Targeting IX

1. Take your dog, your clicker and rewards, and your mat to a friend's house or some other safe indoor location.

2. Build a plan, keeping in mind your dog's targeting facility up until now and that this is a more difficult location.

Step	Prompt Targeting?	Prompt Down?	Distance
IX—A			
IX—B			
IX—C			
IX—D			
IX—E			

Mat Targeting X—Combining Targeting and Down-Stay

1. Put your mat down, go ten feet away, and wait. As soon as your dog goes to the mat and lies down, praise him calmly, but don't approach and pay.

2. After a ten-second *Down-Stay,* go in and pay, feeding for position. Prompt him off and over to your position between trials, so he must perform a ten-foot target and auto *Down* plus ten-second *Stay* for each reward.

3. If he breaks his *Stay,* say "Too bad" and try again. Once again, note the Push-Drop-Stick regime for this exercise:

Push on five for five.

Split to five seconds on three or four for five.

Drop to two seconds on two or fewer for five.

Mat Targeting XI

1. Build duration back into the exercise using the following plan. Between each trial, prompt your dog off the mat and over to your position ten feet away so he must target from ten feet, do the auto *Down* and the *Stay* all for one reward at the end.
   - Thirty seconds
   - Sixty seconds
   - Two minutes
   - Five minutes

2. Throw short *Stays* in between the long ones (they don't count as one of your five trials, but they are necessary between the five official sixty-second trials). Recall that you did this in your original *Stay* building, in Part II. For instance, rather than doing five sixty-second *Stays* in a row, do the following:
   - Sixty seconds
   - Five seconds
   - Eighteen seconds
   - Sixty seconds
   - Sixteen seconds
   - Sixty seconds
   - Nine seconds
   - Sixty seconds
   - Sixty seconds

3. Even though your dog is much more experienced at *Stay* now, if he is like most dogs, he will need Drops and splits. For example, let's say he sails through fifteen seconds with an instant five for five, gets the first one right on the next set, thirty seconds, but then blows three

repetitions in a row. First Drop: Do one more set at fifteen seconds. Then split: Do a set at twenty. Then reattempt thirty. It would also be a good idea to throw in more supershort ones in between.

Push on five for five.

Split as needed.

Mat Targeting XII

1. Repeat the previous exercise, except this time sit in a chair. Get out of the chair only to go in and pay and to prompt your dog off the mat for the next trial.

2. If he had an easy time with the durations in *Mat Targeting XI*, feel free to try more aggressive increments, such as:
   • Ten seconds (to introduce the chair, which is new)
   • Two minutes
   • Five minutes

3. Split the durations as needed, and throw short *Stays* randomly in between.

   Push on five for five.

   Split as needed.

Mat Targeting XIII: Adding a Cue

Get your mat and put it on a table or other high surface near your original mat-training location, the default place you'd most like your dog to go to and lie down when you cue him to do so. Go somewhere in the room, sit down, act natural, and do something else for a while, ignoring your dog. Try not to initiate training if he seems focused on you or the mat.

While you're sitting and acting natural, study the following sequence. Be very familiar with it before beginning to train. It's critical to have your verbal cue come *before* your dog focuses on the mat. Here's the sequence:

1. Say your dog's name, and then tell him "Go to bed please." Wait a full second. Then get up and put the mat down. Go and sit down somewhere in the room, and wait a few seconds.

2. If he targets the mat and lies down (right away is fine), praise, do a token (ten-second) *Stay,* then approach and pay him in position.

3. Prompt him off the mat, put the mat up and out of reach again, and return to where you were sitting.

4. If he doesn't target, lie down, or stay, say "Too bad," put the mat away, and leave the room. Then try again.

When he's five for five, wait twenty-four hours and do another round of this exercise.

After the second round, if he's five for five, Push to *Mat Targeting XIV*.

Mat Targeting XIV

1. Put your mat down in the default location. Call your dog over to you so that he does not target it and lie down. If he is very mat-happy, you may need to be very animated to get him off and keep him off.

2. Keep him off the mat until he seems to give up trying to get on. This is easy to do with some dogs and tricky with others.

3. When he seems to be just hanging out with you, give the cue: "Go to bed, please."

4. Wait a few seconds to see if he heads to the mat. If he targets the mat and lies down, go over immediately, praise and reward him. He is a star.

5. If he doesn't go within a few seconds of the cue, prompt him over, signal a *Down,* and pay, even though you had to help. This is a difficult exercise. Many, many dogs will need help here. Don't repeat your cue over and over.

Stick on five for five with prompting help.

Push as soon as you get five for five without any prompting.

Mat Targeting XV

1. Put your mat down in the default location. Keep your dog off it.

2. Sit in the chair. Use your voice, personal charm, and hands, if necessary, to keep him off the mat.

3. When he seems to have given up, give the "Go to bed, please" cue.

4. Wait a few seconds. If he goes to the mat and lies down, immediately go over and pay. If he doesn't, give him a hand signal and pay anyway.

Stick on five for five with prompting help.

Push on five for five without any prompting.

Mat Targeting XVI

1. Put your mat down in the usual location, but this time let your dog do whatever he wants, including targeting and lying down on the mat. The mat will be down at all times from now on. Do not give the cue.

2. If he gets on the mat and lies down, ignore him. Sit in a chair for a bit, then get up and leave the room.

3. Go about your business, leaving the mat down, and ignoring him if he targets. At least several hours before you plan to cue him to the mat, stash some really good rewards on you. Ignore his interest in this (a little obedience is fine, but no mat targeting).

4. Several hours later, or the next day, when he's given up trying to target, go into the room, call him to you, praise him for coming, and then say "Go to bed, please."

5. If he targets the mat and lies down, praise like crazy and reward him generously, in position as always.

6. If he doesn't target the mat, help him. Do as little prompting as you can get away with. For instance, he may need you to signal him onto the mat but then will lie down by himself. Pay him, in position, even though you had to help.

Repeat this exercise at random times throughout the day, so he's never "warmed up."

Leave the mat down all the time and ignore him when he gets on it "off-cue" (by himself, at a time when you haven't given the cue).

Stick on five for five with prompting help.

Push when he's done five in a row at random times during the day and without any prompting.

Mat Targeting XVII: From Another Room

1. At a random time during the day, and when you're in another room of the house with your dog, give the "Go to bed, please" cue.

2. Wait a full second or so. Then encourage him to follow you out of the room and over to where the mat is. If he targets and lies down, praise and pay in position. If he seems confused, prompt the targeting and, if necessary the *Down*. Pay even though you helped.

3. Go back into the other room with your dog and try another one, warmed up this time rather than cold. If he needs help, give as much as he needs, but try to get him to do part (such as the *Down*) on his own. Pay no matter how much help he needed.

4. Do three more so you have a set of five. Keep track of whether he improves over the course of the set. Here's an example of a typical dog's progress on this exercise.

Trial Number	Cold or Warmed Up?	Prompt Him to Go into Room?	Prompt Him to Target Mat?	Prompt Down?
One	Cold	Yes, had to	Yes, a bit	No—auto down
Two	Slight warm-up	Yes, had to	No—he beelined	No—auto down
Three	Warmed up	Yes, had to	No—he beelined	No—auto down
Four	Warmed up	Just a little!	No—he beelined	No—auto down
Five	Warmed up	Almost nothing	No—he beelined	No—auto down

Notice how the behavior improves over the course of the five trials. Once your dog is warmed up, it's easier. The ultimate goal for this exercise is to have the dog get it right cold: without having done it for days, on the first cue, he goes to the room where the mat is, goes directly to the mat, and auto downs. How was your first session?

Session 1				
Trial Number	Cold or Warmed Up?	Prompt Him to Go into Room?	Prompt Him to Target Mat?	Prompt Down?
One	Cold			
Two	Slight warm-up			
Three	Warmed up			
Four	Warmed up			
Five	Warmed up			

Wait at least twenty-four hours so he'll "cool off" completely and then do another set of five in a row, keeping track of how he does.

Session 2				
Trial Number	Cold or Warmed Up?	Prompt Him to Go into Room?	Prompt Him to Target Mat?	Prompt Down?
One	Cold			
Two	Slight warm-up			
Three	Warmed up			
Four	Warmed up			
Five	Warmed up			

Wait at least twenty-four hours so he'll "cool off" completely and then do another set of five in a row, keeping track of how he does.

Session 3				
Trial Number	Cold or Warmed Up?	Prompt Him to Go into Room?	Prompt Him to Target Mat?	Prompt Down?
One	Cold			
Two	Slight warm-up			
Three	Warmed up			
Four	Warmed up			
Five	Warmed up			

Keep doing these sessions until he requires no prompting at all on the first trial.

Push when he's been perfect for five days "cold."

Mat Targeting XVIII

1. Repeat this exercise from every room in your house, starting off with the rooms closest to the room where the mat is situated, and progressing to the rooms that are more distant. Pay your dog even when you have to help him. Help only as needed.

2. Only Push to another room when the dog heads to the mat on his own (unprompted) on the first trial of the set (the "cold" trial). If he's not perfect on the first trial, complete a set of five and keep track of how he does. This kind of record is a fascinating glimpse into how dogs learn. Each new room may "wobble" the behavior temporarily, but as you add rooms, your dog's learning curve will probably get steeper: you may even find he starts doing it perfectly, without prompting, on the first trial in a new room! Your dog is far from a beginner now.

Push when your dog performs perfectly from any room in the house on the first trial.

Mat Targeting XIX: Natural Distractions

1. Make a list of contexts in which you would like to have your dog able to target his mat and do a *Down-Stay*. Here's a sample list:

    • When I'm carrying large packages up or down stairs

    • When we are eating dinner and he's bugging us

    • When someone visits who doesn't like dogs

2. Look at all the items on your list. Mark as *easy* the ones where there is no strong, attractive distraction. On the list above, "carrying large packages" would be easy. Mark as *medium* ones where there is an attractive distraction but that would not be logistically difficult to train. "Eating dinner" is in this category: it's a strong distraction but mealtimes are regular and you could certainly invest some time in training in order to get the payoff. Mark as *difficult* items that have strong distractions and are logistically tricky to train. The "visitors" scenario is difficult because for most dogs new people are a heavy distraction and it's logistically fiendish because most of us don't want to budget our attention to training the dog when people are in our home.

3. Based on these ratings (which get at how "expensive" the training will be for you) and on how motivated you are to achieve each item, make a new list of the ones you will actually have a go at training. Order them from easiest to most difficult. We'll tackle the easy ones first—each one will sharpen both you and the dog just that little bit more so that when you embark on the more difficult projects, you'll both be more advanced.

    Now build a training plan for your first item. Following is an example of set-by-set plan for the carrying packages scenario. There are blanks on the DVD that you can print to build and record your own training. The sets are mixed insofar as you will prompt only as much as is needed to get the behavior. This means you will first try a verbal cue, wait a few seconds, then signal the dog to the mat if necessary, wait, and finally signal the *Down* if necessary. Pay even when you have to prompt, but only Push to a harder distraction when you don't have to prompt on the first trial: your dog targets on the verbal cue and auto downs. Here's a sample dog:

    Push when your dog targets the mat on the first cue and auto downs "cold"—after at least twenty-four hours without training.

> ## *Why Am I Paying if I Have to Prompt?*
>
> In a longish behavior chain such as this, where it doesn't matter about the style in which the dog does the behavior, our consistent paying at the end, in position, will result naturally in a dog who is in a rush to do the final behavior, in this case the *Down* on the mat (and later the *Stay*). So even though you're paying both when your dog does it on his own and when you have to prompt him, there is still incentive for him to do it on his own as that will get him paid more quickly.

Set 1				
Trial	**Cold or Warmed Up**	**Distraction**	**Prompting Needed**	**PDS**
One	Cold	Walking in room (near mat) with boxes	Had to prompt twice to get him over to the mat after I gave the verbal cue. Auto down after a few seconds.	
Two	Slight warm-up	Ditto	Ditto	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Needed only one prompt to target. Faster auto down.	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Targeted on cue! Auto down.	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Stick

Set 2				
Trial	**Cold or Warmed Up**	**Distraction**	**Prompting Needed**	**PDS**
One	Cold	Walking in room (near mat) with boxes	Targeted and went down before verbal cue, as soon as I picked up boxes. (Paid anyway.)	
Two	Slight warm-up	Ditto	Perfect on verbal cue. (Hard getting him off the mat for new trial!)	

(continued)

Set 2 *(continued)*				
Trial	Cold or Warmed Up	Distraction	Prompting Needed	PDS
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Push

Set 3				
Trial	Cold or Warmed Up	Distraction	Prompting Needed	PDS
One	Cold	Going up stairs carrying boxes	Needed prompt to target but then auto downed.	
Two	Slight warm-up	Ditto	Perfect on verbal cue.	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Stick

Set 4				
Trial	Cold or Warmed Up	Distraction	Prompting Needed	PDS
One	Cold	Stairs again	Perfect!	
Two	Slight warm-up	Ditto	Ditto	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Got distracted by noise outside but then okay.	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Perfect!	Push

Let's look at the dinner scenario next. There are two challenges here, the targeting from wherever the dinner table is, and getting the dog to maintain

the *Down-Stay* for the duration of the meal. As usual, this is best trained sys-tematically. Here is an example.

Set 1					
Trial	**Cold or Warmed Up**	**Duration (Stay) and Distraction**	**Prompting Needed**	**Down-Stay Performance**	**PDS**
One	Cold	One minute during evening meal	Had to walk over to mat with him, then an auto down	Broke after fifteen seconds	
Two	Slight warm-up	Ditto	Ditto	Broke right away	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Drop!
Four	Warmed up	Ditto			
Five	Warmed up	Ditto			

Notice that the trainer Dropped as soon as the dog blew three trials in a row, as the dog wasn't even in the ballpark. Set 2 is a continuation of the training in set 1, so the dog is warmed up on the first trial this time.

Set 2					
Trial	**Cold or Warmed Up**	**Duration (stay) and Distraction**	**Prompting Needed**	**Down-Stay Performance**	**PDS**
One	Warmed up	10 seconds during evening meal	Prompted targeting, stood at door of room during stay to get a success while the others ate	Got it!	
Two	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Push

Set 3					
Trial	Cold or Warmed Up	Duration (stay) and Distraction	Prompting Needed	Down-Stay Performance	PDS
One	Warmed up	Thirty seconds during evening meal	Prompted targeting, stood at door of room during *Stay* to get a success while the others ate	Got it!	
Two	Warmed up	Ditto	Targeted on cue!	Ditto	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Push

Set 4					
Trial	Cold or Warmed Up	Duration (stay) and Distraction	Prompting Needed	Down-Stay Performance	PDS
One	Warmed up	Ten seconds during evening meal	Prompted targeting, went back to sit down, then got up to pay	Got it (phew)!	
Two	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Targeted on cue!	Ditto	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Push

It would be fine to train some more during this meal, but this is a nice foundation and so also a reasonable place to quit until the next time. For the remainder of the meal, the dog can be ignored if he hangs around the table, or crated or locked in another room if he's a nuisance.

Let's look at the next session, two days later.

Set 5					
Trial	Cold or Warmed Up	Duration (stay) and Distraction	Prompting Needed	Down-Stay Performance	PDS
One	Cold	Ten seconds during evening meal	Targeted on the verbal cue!!!	Got it (gave a double reward)	
Two	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Push

Set 6					
Trial	Cold or Warmed Up	Duration (stay) and Distraction	Prompting Needed	Down-Stay Performance	PDS
One	Warmed up	Thirty seconds during evening meal	Targeted on the verbal cue!!!	Got it	
Two	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Broke at around twenty seconds (said "Too bad" when he appeared in dining room, then escorted him back)	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Got it	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Broke again	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Got it	Stick

Set 7					
Trial	Cold or Warmed Up	Duration (stay) and Distraction	Prompting Needed	Down-Stay Performance	PDS
One	Warmed up	Thirty seconds during evening meal	None—perfect again	Got it	
Two	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Got it	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Got it	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Got it	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Got it	Push

The next set would be an attempt at sixty seconds. If that's successful, two minutes, then five, ten, and the full duration of the evening meal. The duration parameter supplies infinite splitting options, as does your location: you could stand in the doorway to introduce the longer durations. Remember to sprinkle in a few short *Stays* between the longer durations. You don't have to do this to the degree you did back when you were training long duration *Stays* for the first time, but it is wise to do a few.

If you split your distance and trained in the doorway in order to build up the duration, once the dog is successful for the duration it takes to eat a complete meal, train from the table. You don't need to repeat all the increments this second time around. Try half the duration of the meal and then the full duration, with one or two random rewards thrown in. It does mean you have to get up in the middle of your meal in order to go reward the dog on his mat, but this investment will pay off in a polite *Down-Stay* during meals for the rest of your dog's life.

Finally, here are a few sample sets to flesh out the parameters of a mat target and *Down-Stay* in the presence of a visitor to the house. Use these as a springboard to build a full plan. This distraction is particularly difficult so be sure to use high-value rewards.

In spite of the wobbly first trial, the trainer elected to do a *discretionary Push,* in other words, a Push on a four for five, which would normally be a default Stick. The first trial was the only cold one, so technically the dog was four for four once warmed up, which he still will be on the next set. Let's see how he does:

Set 1					
Trial	**Cold or Warmed Up**	**Duration (Stay) and Distraction**	**Prompting Needed**	**Down-Stay Performance**	**PDS**
One	Cold	Five seconds, visitor seated	Prompted targeting, prompted down	Stood next to dog on mat and paid every five seconds—he broke excitedly ("Too bad" and didn't let him collect the reward of sniffing the visitor)	
Two	Warmed up	Ditto	N/A—just worked stay	Got it—phew	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Got it	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Got it	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Got it	Push

Set 2					
Trial	**Cold or Warmed Up**	**Duration (Stay) and Distraction**	**Prompting Needed**	**Down-Stay Performance**	**PDS**
One	Warmed up	Five seconds, visitor seated	Targeted on cue!!	"Bungeed" back to sofa with visitor, then went to mat and paid—got it!	
Two	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Push

Set 3					
Trial	Cold or Warmed Up	Duration (Stay) and Distraction	Prompting Needed	Down-Stay Performance	PDS
One	Warmed up	Thirty seconds, visitor and me seated	Targeted on cue!	Broke just before the end—drat!	
Two	Warmed up	Ditto	Needed a prompt	Got it	
Three	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Four	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	
Five	Warmed up	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Stick

There is no limit to the directions in which you can take this exercise, provided you adhere to Push-Drop-Stick rules and have an organized, incremental training plan. Trainers who train by the seat of their pants, making up steps and Push points as they go along, typically get uneven results. They get away with it sometimes, which makes them feel their technique is good, but inevitably dogs will fall apart, and badly, due to this hack training style. Training correctly greatly raises the chances of a professional job, which means virtually any dog learning any behavior will make steady progress.

Don't be a hack—train like a pro, with an organized, incremental plan and PDS.

Chapter 14

Retrieve

The retrieve is my favorite behavior to train. When I used to take dogs into my house to train them, I almost always instilled a retrieve as an extra. It polished up my skills on a huge variety of dogs, and gave the owner an exercise and enrichment option. Once a retrieve is built, it can be applied to any item the dog can carry, and it can be used as a foundation for other games, such as toy hide-and-seek. I also think it adds value to the dog's toys, as now they are associated with her enjoyable time with you learning to retrieve them.

SHAPING THE DEAD RETRIEVE

We're going to shape (train by small steps) a *dead retrieve,* which means the object lies still on the floor or in your hand. This is different from a *live retrieve,* where the trainer prompts the dog by throwing or wiggling the object. Because dogs are predators, they have a natural tendency, as do cats, to chase and bite moving objects. Not every dog has this drive in a strong way, but almost all dogs have at least a little. If your dog has a strong natural retrieve—without any training she chases an object you throw, picks it up, and brings it back to you—I still urge you to train a dead retrieve.

Although I'm also a fan of training live retrieves, I'm choosing a dead retrieve here for a couple of reasons. One is that a dead retrieve is unparalleled for building certain training skills: timing, criteria setting with superfine splits, disciplined adherence to Push-Drop-Stick rules, and strategic position feeds. By training without prompts (notably the prompt of a moving object), you will be able to focus solely on the above training skills. My goal is for you to focus on razor-sharp timing, sophisticated criteria setting, and feeding for position!

Items Needed

- A clicker, precharged (see p. 146)
- A retrieve object that your dog won't chew or shred

- An easy-to-use portable timer to count down one minute (beeps)
- A supply of small soft treats

Retrieve Prep

1. If you have not already done so, charge your clicker (see page 146). This is not a case where it's smart to *charge as you go*, that is, the dog is being taught a behavior while gradually learning the meaning of the clicker. Get an easy-to-use timer, something that you can set to one minute. We're going to train in one-minute sets where you will keep track of how many times your dog is rewarded. You'll start the timer to count down one minute and train until it beeps. The number of rewards (number of clicks) in that minute will determine whether you Push, Drop, or Stick.

2. Choose an object such as a durable dog toy. It can be anything your dog won't chew or shred and that won't roll around, which would make it harder for you to observe. Once the retrieve is instilled, you can transfer it to things like the newspaper or your slippers, but these are not good choices for initial instillation.

3. Get prepared: familiarize yourself with the milestones.

Dead Retrieve Milestones	
One	Nose touch
Two	Lip touch
Three	Nibble or mouth on
Four	Partial lift
Five	Pick up (full lift)
Six	Pick up, turn, and carry partway back
Seven	Pick up, turn, and carry all the way to trainer
Eight	Add cue

Now read through the first few steps, including the "Help! She Didn't Even Look at the Object" sidebar, load up with food, get your thumb on the button of the clicker so you won't be late on the first trial, and clear a spot in

the house so you can get down on your hands and knees for an unobstructed view of the action. Put the object down when it is very clear in your mind what you are about to be clicking: your dog's nose within an inch of the object.

Don't forget to always pay after clicking.

Retrieve I: Nose Touch

1. Set your timer for one minute. With your thumb ready on the clicker, start the timer and put the object down. Your dog will probably investigate it. Click when she puts her nose near it. Count: "One." Feed on the floor a couple of feet from the object. Then wait, keeping your eyes on the object.

2. Click every time she puts her nose near the object, and feed a couple of feet away on the floor after each click. Make sure you click first and feed after. Your goal is to click at the instant her nose is closest to the object. Keep count of your clicks out loud—it's easier to remember this way.

3. When the timer goes off, pick up the object. How many clicks were there?

Number of Clicks	What Exactly Were You Clicking?	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Ten plus	Dog's nose touching object	Push to *Retrieve II*
Ten plus	Dog's nose within a few inches of object	Push to nose touches
Five to nine	Dog's nose touching object	Stick—do another minute
Five to nine	Dog's nose within a few inches of object	Stick—do another minute
Zero to four	Dog's nose touching object	Drop to nose within a few inches of object
Zero to four	Dog's nose within a few inches of object	Drop to nose orienting at object—within two feet

Keep doing sets using the above chart as a Push-Drop-Stick guide. When you've got ten or more nose touches in a minute, move on to *Retrieve II*.

Push on ten per minute.

Help! She Didn't Even Look at the Object

You are not alone. Plenty of dogs start out this way and end up with splen-did retrieves. Try the following:

1. Put the object down and click any movement your dog makes—anything at all (breathing will do).
2. Pay on the floor a couple of inches from the object.
3. When she trundles over and collects the piece of food, click—her nose is within a few inches.
4. Pay on a new spot on the floor but still within a couple of inches of the object.
5. Click as she collects.
6. Do ten of these, then pick up your object.
7. Wait a minute or two and then do another set of ten.
8. Retire for the day, and then try *Retrieve I* tomorrow—click anytime her nose is within a few inches, but now pay a couple of feet away.

Retrieve II: Shopping Practice

Take another look at the "Shopping" sidebar on page 175.

1. Start your timer and warm up your dog with a minute of nose touches, as you did in *Retrieve I*.

2. Click all nose touches but don't *count* them. Instead, do some observ-ing—some shopping.

To do a good job at observing, it really helps to get on your hands and knees, or to find a comfortable position that allows you to see the action with your eyes at floor level a couple of feet from the object. The first time you do this, your dog may react to you with kissing, playing, or even spooking. Wait this stuff out and start clicking and delivering as soon as she's back on task.

The reason you're so obsessively close is so that you can see exactly *how* your dog is doing her nose touches. Are they all the same or does she use different parts of her nose? Are some more vigorous than others? If you're not sure or if it was all you could do to click and deliver, do another minute of nose touches. The observing part of training takes practice.

3. When the timer goes off, take stock. What variations did you see?

Which Part of Nose Variations

- Top or side of nose
  - Always or most frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Never
- Front of nose or lips
  - Always or most frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Never

| TOP | SIDE | FRONT | LIPS |
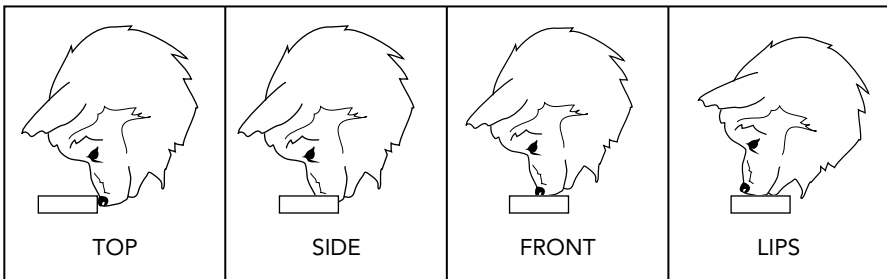
Vigor Variations

- Barely touching object
  - Always or most frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Never
- Pressing nose against object or moving it
  - Always or most frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Never

Shopping

For behaviors like sit, down, coming when called, and others, the over-whelming majority of dogs will do well with a standard training plan—the milestones don't differ much, and it's inefficient to reinvent the wheel for

each new dog. In the case of a retrieve, however, the "path" an individual dog will take varies a great deal, and so training plans need much more customizing. This is why you must now get better at "shopping."

Shopping means waiting for your dog to at least sometimes do your next step spontaneously before you officially Push to that step. Here's a human example. Let's say a child is learning to color *within the lines* in a coloring book. On his first round of pictures, he colors in the lines about 50 percent of the time. It's very hard to predict how good he'll be on the next round of pictures—if you made a hard-and-fast decision to only praise the child if he was 80 percent within the lines, the child might not get any encouragement at all. So the best training decision is to praise the child for his continuing 50 percent ("Oh wow, look at that bit—you are right in the lines!") and wait until the child shows evidence of being able to make a higher standard before actually demanding that higher standard.

So now you are doing two things at once: clicking an existing behavior and shopping for your future behavior. In order to Push, not only must you have ten or more of the existing behavior, you must have at least some instances—four or five—of the next step.

For instance, if your dog is doing light touches (*barely touching*) with the top of her nose ten or more times per minute, keep clicking and paying most of these. Paying most but not all usually prompts a bit of variation, the *stuff* of shopping. While doing so, shop—observe and count—for more vigorous touches and any touches your dog does with the side of her nose, front of her nose, or lips.

As soon as the two ingredients are there—a ten-per-minute click rate and a four/five-per-minute preview of the next behavior—go ahead and Push: start clicking only the four/five-per-minute behavior.

Use the following chart to help you get used to training this way:

Variation	How Often?	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Top or side of nose Barely touching	Occasionally or never	Stick if occasional See "Help!" sidebar if never
Top or side of nose Barely touching	Always or frequently (ten plus)	Click most but not all and shop for greater vigor or front of nose/lips
Top or side of nose Pressing or moving object	Occasionally	Stick until you have ten per minute, then start shopping for front/lips

Variation	How Often?	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Top or side of nose Pressing or moving object	Always or frequently (ten plus)	Click most but not all and shop for front/lips
Front of nose or lips Barely touching	Occasionally	Stick until you have ten per minute, then shop for vigor
Front of nose or lips Barely touching	Always or frequently (ten plus)	Click most but not all and shop for front/lips pressing or moving the object
Front of nose or lips Pressing or moving object	Occasionally	Stick until you have ten per minute, Push to *Retrieve III*
Front of nose or lips Pressing or moving object	Always or frequently (ten plus)	Push to *Retrieve III*

Retrieve III: Mouth

1. By now your dog is pressing the front of her nose or lips against the object, possibly even moving it when she does so, and she's doing this at a rate of approximately ten per minute. Now you will shop for:

   • Nibbling with her lips

   • An open-mouthed touch

   • Anything to do with her teeth

   Click most but not all of her front/lip touches, and watch very closely to see the first signs of nibbling, mouth, or teeth activity. To watch closely, you'll need to get on hands and knees again. It also helps not to blink.

2. If you see any mouth activity, click it every time along with your regime of "most but not all" front/lip touches.

3. If you don't see any mouth activity, continue clicking most but not all front/lip touches, and concentrate on splitting this more finely: given that you're not clicking every single one, can you find any existing variation and click the better ones? *Better* usually means longer duration, moving the object more, or, if your dog is a front-of-noser, clicking all lips.

4. If you feel frustrated or for the life of you, you can't see variation, quit the session and give yourselves at least two days off. This processing time can sometimes roll the process forward and is one of the benefits of spacing sessions out in time.

Here's the summary chart:

Variation	How Often?	Push, Drop, or Stick?
Front of nose	Occasionally or never	Drop back to *Retrieve II*
Front of nose	Always or frequently (ten plus)	Click most but not all and shop for nibbling, mouth open, or teeth action
Lips	Occasionally	Click most but not all front of nose touches, and all lips
Lips	Always or frequently (ten plus)	Click most but not all and shop for nibbling, mouth open, or teeth action (If no nibbling, mouth, or teeth after a few sets, refine split: longer lip touch or more object movement)
Mouth action!	Occasionally	Click every one and keep count
Mouth action!	Always or frequently	Push to *Retrieve IV*

Retrieve IV: Grasping and Lifting

1. The mouth action—be it nibbling, a tooth press, or open-mouthed touch—is a fabulous accomplishment. Warm up by clicking and paying your dog's current version of mouth action. Then start shopping. You will now shop for more and more mouth *opening,* which will lead to biting, and getting part of the object off the ground.

2. Look at the following chart and identify what behavior in the left-hand column your dog does at high rate during the warm-up. Then check the corresponding right-hand column to see the most likely shopping target. Set your timer and get down on the floor for a perfect view of the object and your dog's muzzle. While clicking and paying the behavior in the left-hand column for one minute, count how many times she does the variation on the right.

Which of These Mouth Actions Is She Already Doing?—Click It Every Time	Shopping Targets—Count How Many of These She Does
Combination of nibbles and presses	Click nibbles only and shop for wider ones
Combination of open-mouthed touches and biting	Click all bites, some open-mouthed touches, and shop for any part of object off the ground
Combination of everything	Click all open–mouthed touches or biting, some nibbles, but no presses
Nibbling with front teeth	Any slightly wider opening
Pressing front teeth	Object movement, any small nibble
Opening her mouth and touching with canine teeth	Object movement, especially upward
Sort of biting or grasping!	Getting part of the object off the ground
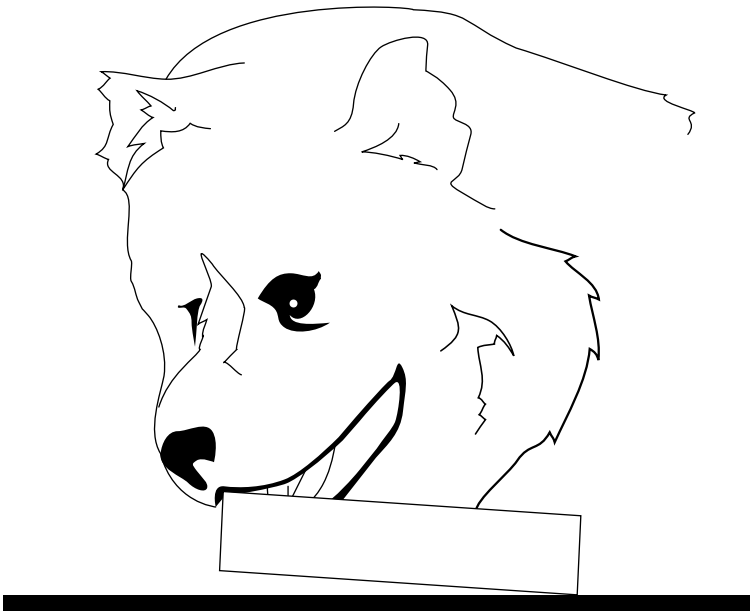
PARTIAL LIFT

3. Work your way down this chart until you reach the bottom and see any part of the object come off the ground at least eight times per minute. The reason eight is now the Push point, rather than ten, is that the actual behavior takes longer for the dog to do. Partial lifts *eat* time.

4. Accept any happy accidents. It is common for early successes to be by chance: a lower canine tooth snags the object and it comes ever so slightly off the ground. Click and pay this, even though you think the dog didn't intend the partial lift. In good animal training, we don't care *why* the dog did the behavior, we care *that* she did it. Accidental successes translate over time into deliberate offerings of the behavior. So catch all improvements with that click. Click as early as possible, catching the object on the way up, rather than on the way down after the partial lift.

Push on eight or more partial lifts per minute.

Retrieve V: Pickup

1. To transition from a partial to a full lift (pickup), pay all partials while shopping for fulls.

2. As soon as the shopping count gets to six per minute, switch to only clicking full lifts.

3. *Click early*. Timing is absolutely critical. At this stage most dogs will pick up the object only briefly, and then let it slip out of their mouths. You must click the pickup and not the drop! As soon as the object clears the floor, click. The dog does not have to lift the object to any particular height, she just needs to get both ends off the floor. If she does lift it higher *after* the click, that's fine, but it's not required, so don't wait for it. Click as soon as you see the lift, even if you think your dog might get it higher. Late clicks at this stage will often catch the dog just starting to drop the object, which is catastrophic for the overall cause.

4. Once the count has risen to eight pickups per minute, read the following mechanics note—there is a regime tweak. Here's the summary chart:

Variation	How Frequently Does Dog Do It?	I Will Therefore Click	PDS and Shopping Notes
Partial lift	Occasionally	All	Stick until frequent
Partial lift	Frequently (eight plus)	Some but not all	Shop for full lifts
Full lift (pickup)	Occasionally	All	Click most but not all partials, and all full lifts—Stick like this until full lifts are frequent (8+)
Full lift (pickup)	Frequently (eight plus)	All—and feed at trainer (see below)	Push to *Retrieve VI*

CLICK EARLY

FULL LIFT or PICKUP
Click as the dog picks up, not as the dog lets go.

DEAD RETRIEVE WITH POSITION FEEDING

As soon as you are getting frequent full lifts, start *feeding at trainer*. Position yourself six feet from the dog and the object, and proceed to click pickups. After every click, offer the food from your hand so that your dog must walk a few steps in order to collect. Once she's collected, put the object back down six feet away.

   Stay at your station from the get-go: don't step forward or reach out to help her collect as she's on her way to you, as this will erode the habit of her going all the way to you. For the first while, your dog will be only going all the way to you to collect, but later she will be bringing the object all the way back.

   Up until now you've been feeding on the floor so your dog will need a number of trials to get used to this new regime. Here is the sequence:

   1. Place object and station yourself six feet away, waiting for the pickup.
   2. Pickup by dog.
   3. Click (as soon as object clears the ground).
   4. Stand still and offer the treat from your hand at your dog's head height—don't step forward: deliver the treat near the front of your body.
   5. Dog comes over to collect.
   6. Re-place object and reposition yourself for the next trial.

   This process will eat some time, so your new target rate is six or more per minute.

> **Push on six or more pickups per minute, with treat collection at the trainer.**

1   Click!

2   Feed at Trainer
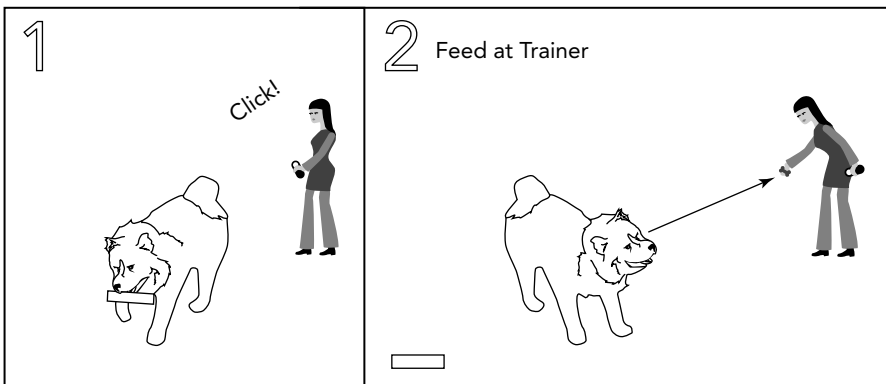
What Is the Purpose of This Position Feed?

The final act in a retrieve is the act of the dog approaching you and placing the object in your hands. You can prime this with crafty position feeds at the pickup stage. By locating reward-collection at your—the trainer's—position, the dog develops an early habit of turning and approaching rather than standing still after a pickup. Over time, as you continue to work on pickups, you'll notice your dog sometimes carries the object a bit—perhaps turning partway with it still in her mouth—after you click her successful pickup. These *post-click* carries provide superb shopping material for upcoming steps.

   You couldn't feed at your position earlier in the process because you needed to be down on your hands and knees, close enough to the action to see the tiny variations in nose and mouth activity. The position feeding a couple of feet from the object allowed for this sightline. There also wasn't a pickup yet and so no need to prompt post-click carry.

Retrieve VI: Turn and Carry

1. Increase your distance to ten feet, always feeding at your position after each click. Standardize the object's spot and your position with some sort of marker on the ground (for example, a piece of tape). Bend or crane as needed to see the pickups in order to click nice and early.

2. Start shopping for any extra holding onto the object *after* the click. As your dog gets more and more used to collecting at your position, she will sometimes forget to let the object go right away when you click. She might turn toward you before dropping or even turn and take a step. Note all such variations. They are all post-click carries.

   Resist the temptation to delay your click, even if you are getting lots of post-click carries. Continue to click pickups for the time being.

3. Do two one-minute sets and take stock using the following chart. Remember, click pickups while you note the number of each of the following.

Post-Click Carry Inventory Set One
Partial turns:
Full turns:
Turn and half step:
Turn and full step:
Turn and two plus steps:

Post-Click Carry Inventory Set Two
Partial turns:
Full turns:
Turn and half step:
Turn and full step:
Turn and two plus steps:

4. Did any variation occur six or more times per minute on set two? If yes, mark it down (for example, "seven turns plus half step") and carry on doing one-minute sets, always clicking the pickup and noting what you get post-click. This will develop your eye for post-click carry. Push to *Retrieve VII* only when you have a post-click turn and full step six or more times per minute. Because it is so important not to click drops, we want a very reliable post-click turn and full step before we Push.

5. If you are not getting any post-click carry, do a couple more sets, checking your technique. Are you:

- Clicking early—on the pickup? Ironically, clicking late in order to encourage more carry usually ends up clicking the beginning of a drop and so results in less and less carry. This is the paradox of greediness.

- Feeding for position ten feet away?

If you're faithfully following these two important rules, Stick at this step for a couple more sessions. Some dogs need time to get in the groove of going all the way out to the object and then all the way back to you to be paid, and fluency at this to-ing and fro-ing usually precedes post-click carry. If you've done set after set over at least two more sessions with sleep periods in between and still have no post-click carry at all, work on the *Presentation into Your Hand* exercise described on page 189.

Push when your dog does six turn-and-one-step carries per minute.

Remember all the turn and carries are post-click.

My Dog Goes Out, Gets Behind the Object, and Then Picks It Up

This variation still counts as a turn, even though the turn is both prepickup and preclick. Click the pickup and shop for steps after the click.

| 1. Click pick-up | 2. Dog drops on way back after click | 3. Feed at Trainer |
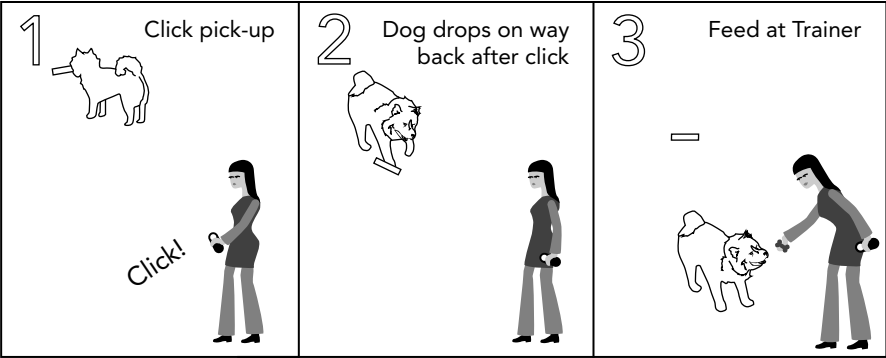
Retrieve VII: Building Distance

1. Your dog now reliably goes out ten feet, picks up the object (*click*), turns, and carries it at least one step toward you before dropping it. She then continues toward you to collect her reward at your position.

2. It is now time to Push criteria to the turn and carry. This means clicking accurately. Click if and only if the object is firmly in your dog's mouth. *If she is starting to drop the object, do not click.* That's a "too bad." Don't try to "save" the trial by clicking.

3. Because the timing is so vital and the temptation to hold out for more steps so high, the rule is: click one step *earlier* than your dog's usual drop point. If you are greedy and click late in an effort to accumulate more steps before the click, you will inevitably click drops, which is catastrophic. Use the following chart to guide you.

If She Consistently (Six Plus) Does	I Will Click At
Turn and one step	The turn
Turn and two steps	One step
Turn and three steps	Two steps
Turn and four steps	Three steps
Etc.	

Notice the one-step click cushion. Do not attempt to cut it finer by clicking a little later (right up to the expected drop point) in order to

simulate faster progress. I've watched hundreds of students train this behavior and have trained it on scores of dogs myself, and greed is the enemy. *Late clicking captures the beginning of dropping, not firm carrying.*
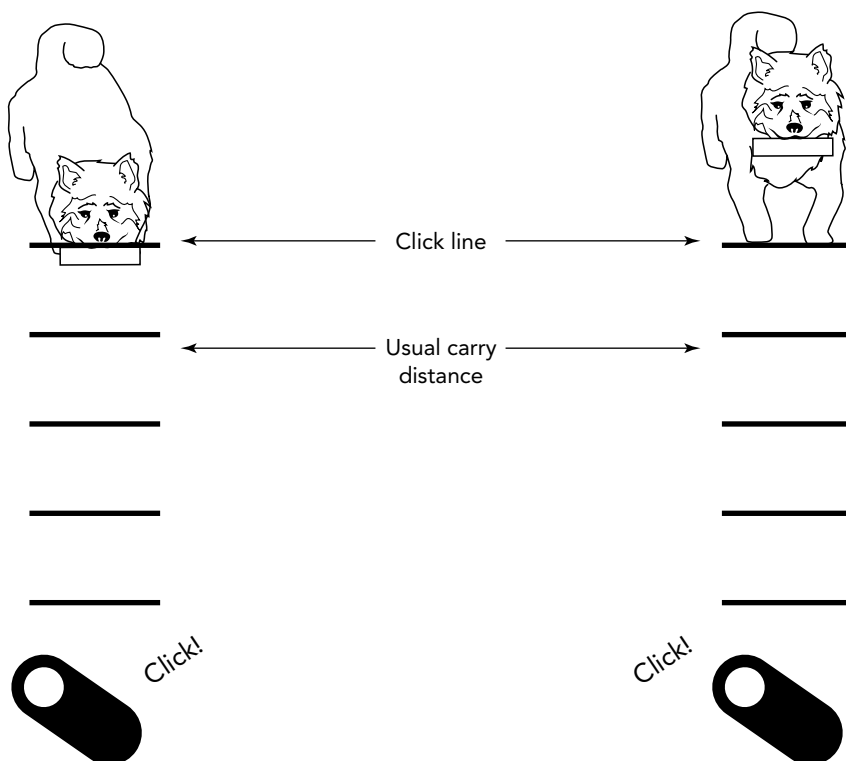
Help! I Can't Count My Dog's Steps

An alternative to counting how many steps your dog takes is placing pieces of tape on the floor. Standardize where you stand, and ten feet away mark an X for the object. This provides an objective visual gauge of your dog's carry distance. Decide on either nose or feet, and then click when you see this body part cross a certain line. This click line should always be one line before your dog's usual carry distance. This conservative clicking avoids capturing drops. For instance, in the example above, the dogs consistently carry to the third line, so the trainer clicks when they cross the second (one dog with her nose, the other with her paw). Only when the dog consistently makes it to line four post-click will the trainer start clicking line three.

4. Keep track of post-click carry. When the dog adds a reliable (six-plus per minute) post-click step, you can click one step later, always maintaining the one-step cushion.

5. If the dog drops early, simply say "Too bad" and re-place your object for the next trial. Do not click in an attempt to save the trial, as you will surely end up clicking the drop. If you're getting lots of early object-dropping, back up to *Retrieve VI* to get your reward rate back up.

6. Add one step at a time, always maintaining the cushion. Once your dog reliably carries the object all the way to your position, start taking hold of the object in your hand before you click. The sequence is:

   a. Dog carries object to your hand

   b. You take hold of object

   c. Click and reward

   d. Re-place object for next trial

   If you feel mechanically inept, it might be that you're trying to click at the same time as you grasp the object. This is not a place where razor-sharp timing is necessary, so concentrate first on getting hold of the object, then clicking. It is even legal to dispense with the clicker altogether for this task. For the same reason, store your food rewards in your pouch or in a container rather than having them in your hand. Your dog is advanced enough now to easily tolerate a delay between the click and the reward delivery, so you have time to dig into the pouch after the click.

   If your dog is fluent at carrying all the way to you but is stymied by the placement into your hand, do the *Presentation into Your Hand* exercise on page 189.

   Push on ten carries in a row from ten feet away right into your hand.

Help! My Dog Fell Apart!

If your dog ever stops picking up, immediately Drop criteria to nose touches. Click ten or so in a row. See if there is any mouth activity or picking up among those ten.

   If you got at least six repetitions with mouth activity, Push to this mouth activity. If you now get full or partial pickups, do a few of these and then quit the session. Try your retrieve the next day.

> If there was no mouth action among the ten, retrain starting at *Retrieve II*. It's not a big deal.
>
> If your dog quits, take a break and regroup. Quitting is usually due to
>
> 1. A rate of reward that is too low. Check your rate:
>   - Ten per minute for nose touches
>   - Eight per minute for full/partial lifts
>   - Six per minute for feed-at-trainer lifts
>   If the rate of reward is too low, you have your answer. Drop back a step or two.
> 2. Training too long. Unless you have a superkeen dog, train for thirty minutes, max.
> 3. Reward value too low. Picking up and carrying objects is expensive behavior for some dogs. If you underpay, you'll not make progress. Certain objects are more expensive than others, too.

Retrieve VIII: Adding a Cue

1. Stash your dog's retrieve object nearby or on your person so that it is invisible to your dog.

2. With your dog hanging out nearby, out of the blue, say to her "Go GET it!" She will look at you or maybe get up. After two seconds, bring out the object and place it on the floor, on or near where you've done most of your practicing up until now. Station yourself ten feet away, and wait. Do not repeat the cue.

3. As soon as your dog retrieves the object, praise lavishly and go with her to the fridge or cookie cupboard for a nice big reward. Wait a little while, until she seems not to be expecting to practice and repeat, starting out with the cue and the pause before placing your object.

If between repetitions her attention stays fixed on you, do something like work on the computer, pick up a book, or turn on the TV. All these activities have long histories of "predicts-nothing-for-dogs" so will help get your dog out of expectant mode. Then, out of the blue, say "Go GET it!" Here's the sequence:

1. Stash the object so that it is not visible or accessible to your dog.

2. Occupy yourself so your dog is not in *training mode*.

3. Out of the blue, say "Go GET it!"

4. Wait two seconds, then make a great show of placing the object. Station yourself ten feet away.

5. Wait for a retrieve.

6. Praise lavishly when she does it, and reward heavily.

   Practice this until your dog runs to the location on the floor after your verbal cue and *before* you actually go to place the object. This tells you she has connected the object and behavior to the cue.

7. Now practice this exercise with the usual object but in different locations.

8. Now try new objects. Warm each one up with nose touches.

PRESENTATION INTO YOUR HAND

This exercise will build a nice presentation into your hand.

Presentation into Your Hand I

Sit in a chair and lean forward so that you have good reach with your arms. Place your object on the floor in front of you and do a set of pickups with your dog. Once she's warmed up, begin practicing taking the object from her as soon as she's picked it up. This may feel mechanically tricky at first. I recommend that you temporarily omit using the clicker to simplify the mechanics. I also suggest storing all bait in a pouch or container, as this will free up both hands. Also, handheld food may prompt fast dropping, the opposite of what we're trying to achieve.

Your goal is to have the object go from your dog's mouth to your hand. Once you've got a grip on the object, praise, and then feed. If you are unable to get hold and the object drops to the floor, say "Too bad" and do not reward. For at least two sessions, you will do most of the work, that is, do your utmost to "bail her out" by reaching or getting under the object so that she is mostly successful.

After a couple of sessions like this, start making your dog a *little* more responsible for getting the object into your hands. Most of the time, arrange to have it end up in your hand, praising and rewarding as usual. Every three or four repetitions, however, don't try very hard to help: put your hand out closer to your body and not so high and, unless she happens to put the object right into it, let the object hit the floor. "Too bad." Do a full session like this, then quit. Let your dog have at least one nap before training again.

Presentation into Your Hand II

In the next session, bail her out only half the time. When you're not helping, hold your hand out in a natural manner. If she puts it into your hand, take the object, praise, and reward. If she drops say "Too bad" and try again. Maintain this regime for several sessions. Sooner or later, your dog will start to aim for the hand. Aside from her visible performance, you'll know this is the case because you will be rewarding more than half the time! It's a fascinating process to watch.

Presentation into Your Hand III

Carry on like this until you are rewarding all the time because your dog puts the object right into your hand even when you don't bail her out. Then stop helping. Do all repetitions without any help until she puts it right into your hand on her own every time.

Presentation into Your Hand IV

The next step is to place the object a foot away so that your dog has to take a step in order to place it in your hand. Carry on with your "too bad" when it hits the floor, and praise and reward when she puts it in your hand. Don't bail her out unless she is dropping the object a lot.

When she consistently puts the object into your hand from a foot away, add placing into your hand to your full-distance retrieve.

Chapter 15

Sit Pretty and Roll Over

SIT PRETTY

This used to be called *Beg,* which I think is an ugly cue compared to *Sit Pretty* or *Be a Bear.* The finished behavior consists of the dog rising up on haunches on the verbal cue and holding position for a few seconds. Take a look at the luring mechanics on the DVD before tackling the plan. Notice that the three parameters—degree of prompting, height off the ground, and duration—are increased separately. There's a physical conditioning component to this trick: the dog's lower back muscles will be used in a new way. For this reason, be sure to allow for downtime between training sessions for your dog's muscles to strengthen. If your dog has back problems, check with your veterinarian before attempting this trick.

Sit Pretty I: Basic Idea

1. Ask your dog to sit, and praise him when he does. Hold a food or toy lure a few inches over his head and move it slightly *backward* so that he cranes to the point that his front feet come off the ground. As soon as his front feet leave the ground, release the treat.

2. If he breaks his sit or jumps up, immediately cancel the lure and start over. The first order of business is teaching him he must keep his rear quarters glued to the ground and move his front end only.

3. Once your mechanics are worked out, do ten rewarded reps, then quit the session. Don't get greedy with height or duration. All we want is front feet a couple of inches off the ground for half a second.

Push on ten for ten.

Sit Pretty II: Full Position

1. Ask your dog to sit, and praise him when he does. This time lure him into a credible *Sit Pretty* pose for the half second, releasing the treat exactly when he hits his mark.
2. If he breaks the sit, cancel right away.
3. If he has difficulty, split back to a height between what you achieved in *Sit Pretty I* and the full position. And still no duration.

Push on ten for ten.

Sit Pretty III: Building Duration

1. Once again, starting with your dog in a sit, lure him into a *Sit Pretty*. Praise as soon as he reaches the proper height, but hold the treat for a full second before releasing it. Be sure to feed for position and not as or after he plops the front end back down again.
2. If he breaks the sit, cancel right away.
3. Once he's done ten one-second *Sit Pretties*, give him a rest break. Then try for two seconds, then three, then four. If he gets fatigued (seems reluctant), it means it's break time. As the durations get longer, your dog will have to balance, which will really work his muscles. Resting between sessions is a very important part of this process.

Push on ten for ten at four seconds.

Sit Pretty IV: Fading the Lure

1. Ask your dog to sit, and praise when he does. This time you will use an empty hand signal. Store the food or toy in your other hand behind your back.

2. Do the luring gesture exactly as you have been doing but with nothing in your hand. As soon as your dog is in position, pay from your other hand. Do not demand any duration. Pay him for going on faith.

3. Once he notices that there is no longer a lure, he may become confused and hesitate. Don't worry about this. Simply cancel the trial and try again. Be very sure to pay him in position from your other hand as soon as he is all the way up. He will quickly see that following the empty hand is just as fruitful, just as it has been for other behaviors he's learned.

Push on ten for ten.

Sit Pretty V: Adding Duration Back In

1. Using the hand signal again, try for two–seconds' duration. Pay from your other hand while your dog is still in the *Sit Pretty* position at the two-second mark. Feeding for position is important here. When he's done ten at two seconds, go right to four seconds. As this is the second time adding duration, we'll steepen the increments.

2. If necessary, split back to one second, then try for two, then three, then four. Some dogs find the duration tricky with just the hand target.

Sit Pretty VI: Adding the Verbal Cue

1. Ask your dog to sit, and praise him when he does. Say "Sit pretty" or whatever cue you've chosen. Keep your hands and body still while you give the verbal cue. Resist the temptation to prematurely start the hand signal or to "help" by tilting your head back or with some other movement.

2. After a full second, give the hand signal as you did in the previous exercise. Pay from your other hand after two seconds.

Push on ten for ten.

> ## *What If He Starts Before My Verbal Cue?*
>
> It is very common for dogs to *jump the cue* (start doing the trick before asked) as behaviors get strong. There are two things you can do to reduce this tendency:
>
> 1. Give your verbal cue early, to preempt the dog.
> 2. Don't reward when he jumps the gun like this—reward him only when he does the behavior *after* the cue.
>
> Part of the reason it's a good idea to add cues to behaviors late in the training process is that if you did it earlier, the edict of not rewarding *off cue* would weaken our fledgling behavior, which is counterproductive. The strong behavior later in training can withstand being partially extinguished (*killed off cue*).

Sit Pretty VII: Smaller Signal

1. With your dog in a *Sit,* give the verbal cue. Wait a full second and then do a smaller hand signal, more of a flick than a signal.
2. Praise as soon as he goes into position and pay from your other hand after two seconds. Be sure to feed for position: while he is balancing, not while he is coming down.

   Push on ten for ten.

Sit Pretty VIII: Verbal Only

1. Sit your dog and give your verbal cue. Then wait. If he goes into position, praise lavishly and pay from behind your back. Do not demand any duration—one second is fine—and be sure to feed for position.
2. If he does nothing, wait several seconds, then say "Too bad" and walk away. Then try again. If you get nothing three times in a row, Drop to *Sit Pretty VII*. Be sure your verbal cue is coming clearly before the tiny hand signal.
3. If you Drop to *Sit Pretty VII* then Push to *Sit Pretty VIII* and still get nothing, split to an even smaller hand signal.
4. When he's reliable on the verbal, add the duration back in. Voilà!

Here is a summary of the steps:

Sit Pretty				
Step	Degree of Prompting	Height	Duration	Verbal Cue
One	Full lure	Front feet an inch or two off the ground	Half a second	None
Two	Full lure	Full height	Half a second	None
Three	Full lure	Full height	One second	None
			Two seconds	
			Three seconds	
			Four seconds	
Four	Hand signal	Full height	Half a second	None
Five	Hand signal	Full height	Two seconds	None
			Four seconds	
Six	Hand signal	Full height	Two seconds	Before hand signal
Seven	Smaller hand signal	Full height	Two seconds	Before hand signal
Eight	None	Full height	One second	Yes
			Two seconds	
			Four seconds	

ROLL OVER

Training dogs to roll over is terrific for developing your mechanics, as well as a supreme example of a gradual process. Impatience is the enemy here. Review the initial luring example on the DVD before commencing. Be sure to use a carpeted surface for this trick, or something even softer if your dog is not young and tough.
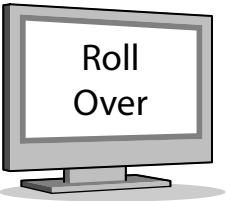
Roll Over I
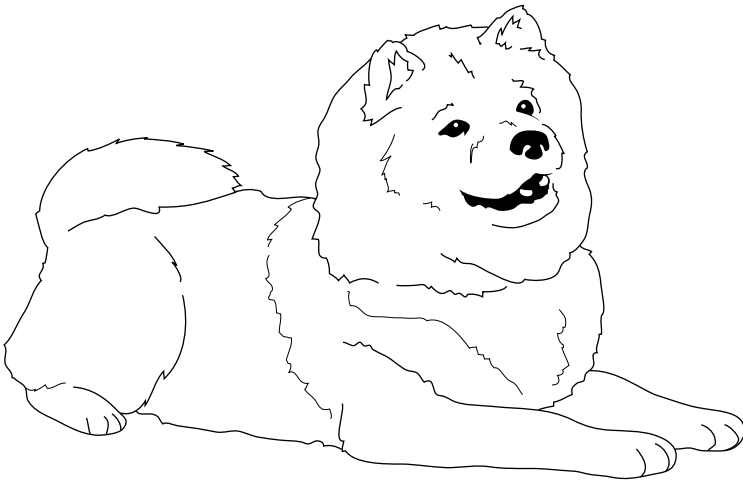
"Sphinx"
down.
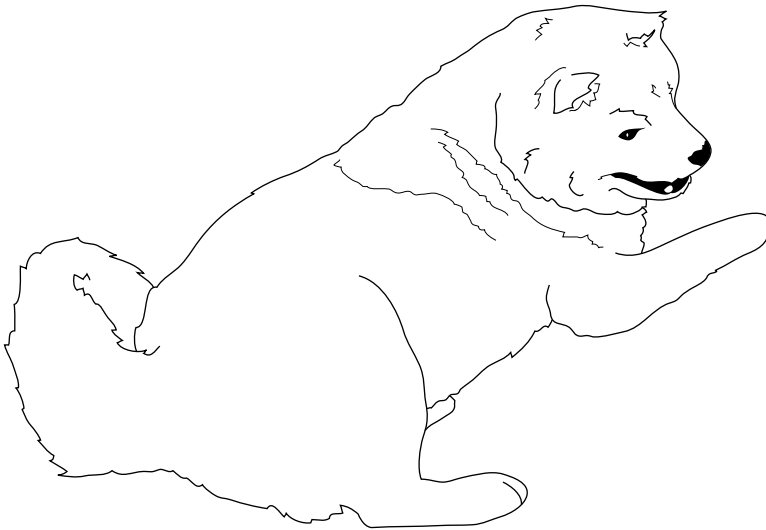
Rolled onto one hip.

1. Look at the pictures. If your dog already rolls onto one hip when he lies down, skip to *Roll Over II*. If he usually performs a *Sphinx Down*, carry on with *Roll Over I*.

2. With your dog in his *Sphinx Down*, use a food lure to turn his head sharply to the side, as though trying to get him to look behind. Keep

the lure low and cancel immediately if he breaks out of the down position, which he could very innocently do in order to track the lure. Rule 1 is *must stay down* while targeting.

3. As soon as he rolls onto one hip, praise and release the treat. Avoid the temptation to physically push him over. It's much better if he uses his own steam.

4. If you've not done this before, it can be tricky. Many dogs need slight adjustments in lure position to get them onto the hip. Study the DVD example and fiddle around with the position. As you fiddle, pay his patient *Down-Stay* occasionally to keep him in the game. It's also a nice split with a tricky dog to pay him for following the lure at all into the head turn, even without the roll. Once your dog is fluent at the head turn, add some duration: most dogs will eventually roll onto their hip in order to keep targeting comfortably. Bingo.

5. Practice until you've gotten five in a row without hesitation.

Push on five for five.

Roll Over II: Shoulder Tuck
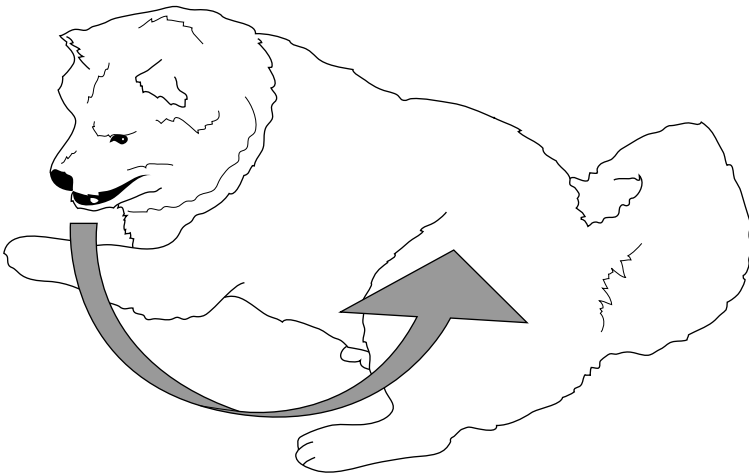
1. With your dog in a *Down* rolled onto one hip, use a lure to draw his nose to his own top hip. Once he's stretched as far as he can, pay in this position. Cancel if he gets out of the *Down*. Practice this to get used to the mechanics and to get him really fluent.

2. After rewarding a bunch of these, do the same luring movement except this time keep going, as though screwing the dog into a tight ball. The idea is to get him to tuck his bottom shoulder under so that he is lying on his side. Once again, the mechanics can be tricky if you're new to this. Review the DVD example, and fiddle with your own dog until you get it.

3. Practice until you've gotten five in a row without hesitation.

Roll Over III: Onto Back and Over

1. The maneuvering from here on varies greatly from dog to dog. The goal is to get the dog onto his back, and then all the way over. The key to getting this is setting goals of *just an inch at a time* so that your dog doesn't give up. Patience.

2. Practice until he goes smoothly in one motion for a lure. Complete ten before attempting *Roll Over IV*.

Push on ten for ten.

Roll Over IV: Fading the Lure

1. Do exactly as you did in *Roll Over III* but quicker now. Instead of a literal lure that moves your dog every step of the way, do a more stylized motion. If after three tries he hasn't rolled over for this new, faster lure, split to a speed between this and what you used in *Roll Over III,* and then gradually speed it up.

2. When he readily and smoothly rolls over for this stylized lure, do the same with an empty hand, paying him at the end from your other hand.

Push on five for five for an empty hand signal.

Roll Over V: Adding a Cue

1. With your dog in a *Down,* give the verbal cue. Keep your hands and body still. Commence the hand signal a full second after giving the verbal cue. Then pay as usual once he completes the roll over.

2. With repetition like this, your dog may start going on the verbal cue (jumping the prompt). If he doesn't and waits for the hand signal every time, reduce the signal gradually until—poof!

Appendix

How Training Works: An Overview

There are four steps to effective training:

- Get the behavior from the dog
- Get the behavior from the dog without prompts
- Name the behavior and take it on the road
- Consolidate, maintain, and protect the behavior

GET THE BEHAVIOR!

The first order of business is to get the animal to perform the action you want trained, and reward him systematically every time he does it. The more you reward it, the more she'll do it. This process is as lawful as gravity.

The most efficient way to get behavior so you can reward-blitz it is to use what's called *prompting*. Having dogs follow food targets and making enticing sounds to get them to come are examples of prompting.

Sometimes you can't get the full version of the action you're after. For example, it may be that you can't prompt the dog to lie down, so you initially settle for an *approximation* such as "nose to the floor while holding a sit." Over several steps, using the Push-Drop-Stick system (see page 9 in "Introduction"), you finally get what trainers call the *terminal* behavior: the dog lying down.

FADE YOUR PROMPTS

Now that the dog is doing the action, the next task is to gradually get her to do it on her own, without any prompts. The progressions in this book will let you do just that—maintain robust responding with less and less help from you.

TAKE IT ON THE ROAD ("GENERALIZATION") AND NAME IT

Once the dog is doing what you want readily and without prompts (in trainer speak, the dog is *fluent*), it's time to start using a formal cue (command) and to start practicing in different contexts. This means rewarding the behavior in new places and adding distractions, with the final goal of obedience anytime, anywhere. You can take this process as far as you wish, provided that you do so gradually, Pushing, Dropping, and Sticking systematically. It is usually around this time that you will add a formal cue, though the perfect time to do this varies.

CONSOLIDATE, MAINTAIN, AND PROTECT

Once the behavior you're working on is generalized to the degree that you would like, you can move on to mainly consolidator-type rewards to maintain it. Rather than doing lots and lots of repetitions with food, praise, or toys as you did while instilling the behavior, you'll make greater use of things like off-leash privileges, door-opening services, opportunities to meet people, and other reinforcers that crop up on a daily basis.

Of course, you can continue strengthening responses as much as you like with extra food- or toy-rewarded repetitions, called *overtraining*, if you'd like really pumped-up obedience. This is analogous to the difference between lifting a *bit* of weights to tone up slightly, lifting more to build some real strength, or flat-out bodybuilding. It's up to you how strong to make your dog's obedience.

Whether or not you decide to overtrain, you'll need to protect what you've built. The principal form of protection is avoiding long stretches of no rewards for any given command. Although some trainers (in my opinion, unethical ones) may tell you that learned behavior no longer needs to be rewarded, or that pleasing you is reward enough, the laws of learning dictate that behavior that is never rewarded will die. This is called *extinction,* and it's as lawful a process as that of behavior growing stronger when rewarded. So, if you want to maintain what you've worked on, reward behavior at least one time in three or four, and preferably when your dog does it particularly well.

Glossary of Animal Training Terms

Cue   A command. A signal to the dog to do an already learned behavior.

Dead Retrieve   Retrieving an unmoving object. Contrast this with a live retrieve, where throwing or wiggling or otherwise bringing the object to life prompts many dogs to orient to, bite, pick up, or even retrieve the object. I am a fan of teaching dead retrieves, even to dogs who might be readily prompted, because it is such an excellent skill-building exercise for the trainer's mechanics and criteria setting.

Double Drop   Do a set two rungs down from the level of difficulty you just attempted.

Drop   Do a set at the level of difficulty one rung below the one you just did.

Fluent   Well learned. Just as you are fluent in English, a dog can become fluent at coming when called.

Ice the dog   End the training session, breaking long enough for the dog to sleep at least once before the next session.

Latency hold   The amount of time the dog has to start performing the behavior you asked for. Also called *limited hold*. Abbreviated LH.

Lure   A piece of food or toy in the trainer's hand that the dog will follow. The lure facilitates guiding a dog's body through space and into positions.

Overtrain   Do extra Stick sets to make behavior extremely strong.

Is There a Difference between a Lure and a Reward?

A *lure* is a subcategory of a *prompt* (something that comes before behavior to make the behavior happen). A *reward* is quite different—it's a consequence and comes after the behavior. The confusion lies in that the same piece of food that is used as a lure (to prompt behavior to happen) is then given after the behavior as a reward. So the food has two roles.

Parameters   The different specs that make up any exercise. For example, a *Down-Stay* has the parameters of distance, duration, and distraction, known as the *3-Ds*. LH is also an example of a parameter.

Prompt   Coaching or help by the trainer before the behavior, to help the dog get it right. Prompts are *faded* (eliminated gradually) once the dog is proficient. Lures and targets are examples of prompts.

Proofing   Adding extra distractions and training in new locations to strengthen a behavior as much as possible. Comes from "*prove* to me you've got it."

Push   Commence a set at the next level of difficulty.

Reward   A piece of food or toy given to a dog *after* execution of a behavior.

Session   A period of time allocated for training, usually in the neighborhood of five to thirty minutes.

Set   A series of five repetitions of the exact same exercise where you keep score of how many out of the five the dog gets right.

Shop   Watch for, and often count, a future level (reps the dog does in a set of five that are above and beyond the current criteria).

Shopping   Looking for your dog to at least sometimes do your next step spontaneously before you officially Push to that step.

Split   A set at an intermediate level of difficulty between two steps.

Stick   Practice another set at the same level of difficulty you just did.

Trial   A single repetition of an exercise. There are five trials in a set.

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Introduction

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What's on the DVD

The DVD contains more than two hours of expert training with author Jean Donaldson, which will give you the confidence to train your dog like a pro!

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JEAN DONALDSON is the author of the classic dog-training book *The Culture Clash.* A three-time winner of the Dog Writers Association of America's Maxwell Award, she is the founder of the Academy for Dog Trainers at the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which has gained a reputation as the equivalent of Harvard for dog trainers and behavior counselors. Visit her Web site at www.jeandonaldson.com.

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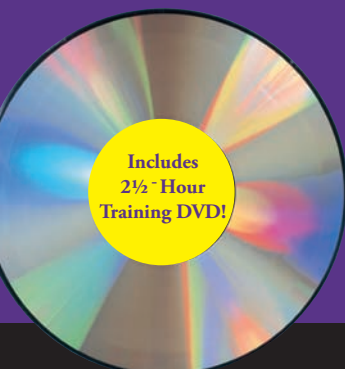
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